Ford Mayor.

Martis ſecundo die Maii 1671. Annoq; Domini Regis CAROLI Secundi *Angliæ*, &c. viceſimo tertio.

THis Court doth deſire Dr. Barrow *to Print his Sermon Preached at the* Spittal *on* Wedneſday *in* Eaſter *Week laſt, with what farther he had prepared to deliver at that time.*

AVERY.

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AVERY.

THE DUTY and REWARD OF BOUNTY TO THE POOR: IN A SERMON

Preached at the

SPITTAL

Upon *Wednesday* in *Easter* Week,

Anno Dom. MDCLXXI.

BY

ISAAC BARROW,

Fellow of *Trinity-College*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,

Printed by *Andrew Clark*, for *Brabazon Aylmer* at the *Three Pigeons* in *Cornhil*.

MDCLXXI.

To the Right Honourable

Sir RICHARD FORD

Lord Mayor of *London*,

AND

The Court of Aldermen.

Right Honble,

AS out of Grateful Respect, I did (although otherwise indisposed for such Employments) endeavour to discharge that Service, which You vouchsafed to call me unto, in conceiving and

uttering these Meditations; so now in publishing them, I do purely submit to Your Commands, meaning therein to approve my self,

Right Honble,

Your most Obedient

Servant,

Isaac Barrow.

IMPRIMATUR,

Jul. 3. 1671.

Sam. Parker, *R^mo in Christo Patri ac Domino D^no* Gilberto *Archiep.* Cantuar. *à Sac. Dom.*

A SERMON

PREACHED at the

SPITTAL,

UPON

Wedneſday in EASTER-WEEK,

Anno Domini 1671.

Pſalm cxii. 9.

He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor; his righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour.

AS this whole Pſalm appears to have a double intent; one to deſcribe the proper affections and acti-

ons of a truly religious or pi-
Verſ. 1. ous man, (of a man *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments*) the other to declare the happineſs of ſuch a mans ſtate, conſequent upon thoſe his affections and actions, whether in way of natural reſult, or of gracious recompence from God: ſo doth this Verſe particularly contain both a good part of a pious mans character, and ſome conſiderable inſtances of his felicity. The firſt words, (*He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the poor*) expreſs part of his character; the latter, (*His righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour*) aſſign inſtances of his felicity. So that

our

our Text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our Duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance thereof; for we are obliged to follow the pious mans practice, and so doing we shall assuredly partake of his condition. These parts we shall in order prosecute, endeavouring (by Gods assistance) somewhat to illustrate the words themselves, to confirm the truths couched in them, and to inculcate the Duties which they imply.

For the first part, *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor*; these words in general do import the liberal bounty and mercy, which a pious man is

wont to exercise; doing which, doth in good part constitute him pious, and signally declareth him such; is a necessary ingredient of his piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof: but particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of those acts.

He hath dispersed, he hath given; Those words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed and given by him, may be supposed to imply a kind of universality in the matter of his Beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath within compass of his possession, or his power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, (the things which he

Luk. 12, 33.

he hath) and his τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may) according to the prescriptions of our Lord in the Gospel. Every thing (I say) which he hath in substance, or can do by his endeavour, that may conduce to the support of the life, or the health, or the welfare in any kind of his Neighbour, to the succour or relief of his indigency, to the removal or easement of his affliction; he may well here be understood to dispense and give: feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, entertaining the stranger, ransoming the captive, easing the oppressed, comforting the sorrowful, assisting the weak, instructing or advising the ig- Luk. 11. 41.

norant, together with all such kinds or instances of Beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good mans dispersing and giving, or by just analogy of reason reducible thereto: substantial alms, as the most sensible and obvious matter of bounty, was ('tis probable) especially intended, but thence no manner of expressing it is to be excluded; for the same reasons which oblige us, the same affections which dispose us to bestow our money, or deal our bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavour and advice for the sustenance and comfort of our poor Neighbour. An-

swer-

ſwerably, our diſcourſe will more expreſly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our goods; but it may be referred to all ſorts of Beneficence.

Farther, the word *diſperſed* intimateth the nature of his bounty, in excluſion of practiſes different from it. He *diſperſeth*, and is therefore not tenacious; doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them cloſe to himſelf for the gratifying his covetous humour, or nouriſhing his pride, or pampering his ſenſuality, but ſendeth them abroad for the uſe and benefit of others. He *diſperſeth* his goods, and therefore alſo doth not fling them away altogether,

as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or despised them; but fairly and softly, with good consideration he disposeth of them here and there, as reason and need do require. He *disperseth* them *to the poor*, not dissipateth them among vain or lewd persons in wanton or wicked profusions, in riotous excesses, in idle divertisements, in expensive curiosities, in hazardous gamings; in any such courses, which swallow whole all that a man hath, or do so cripple him, that he becomes unable to disperse any thing: Our good man is to be understood wisely provident, honestly industrious, and soberly frugal, that

Οὐ γὰρ οἷόν τε χρήματα ἔχειν μὴ ἐπιμελούμενον ὅπως ἔχῃ. Arist. Eth. 4. 1.

that he may have wherewith to be juſt firſt, and then liberal.

His *diſperſing* alſo (or *ſcattering*, ſo the * Hebrew word here uſed is other where rendred: *There is* (ſaith the Wiſeman) *that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth*: where we may remark, that this word ſingly by it ſelf, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is uſed to ſignifie this kind of practiſe; this his *diſperſing*, I ſay alſo) denotes the extent of the pious mans bounty, that it is very large and diffuſive, and in a manner unreſtrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is with-held from no perſons within the verge of his power, and opportunity to do good.

* מזר

Prov. 11. 24.

This

This practiſe commonly by a like phraſe (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed *ſowing*: *He* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *which ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall alſo reap ſparingly; and he which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall alſo reap bountifully*: Now, he that ſoweth, having choſen a good ſoil, and a fit ſeaſon, doth not regard one particular ſpot, but throweth all about ſo much as his hand can hold, ſo far as the ſtrength of his arm doth carry. It is likewiſe called *watering*, (*He that watereth*, ſaith Solomon, *ſhall be watered himſelf*;) which expreſſion alſo ſeemeth to import a plentiful and promiſcuous effuſion of good, dropping in ſhowres upon dry and

2 Cor. 9. 6, 10. Gal 6. 7, 8. Prov. 11. 18.

Prov. 11. 25.

and parched places; that is, upon perſons dry for want, or parched with affliction: So the good man doth not plant his bounty in one ſmall hole, or ſpout it on one narrow ſpot, but with an open hand diſſeminates it, with an impartial regard diſtils it all about: he ſtints it not to his own family or relations; to his neighbours, or friends, or benefactours; to thoſe of his own ſect and opinion, or of his humour and diſpoſition; to ſuch as ſerve him, or oblige him, or pleaſe him; whom ſome private intereſt tyes, or ſome particular affection endears him to; but ſcatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all men that need

need it; toward meer ſtrangers, yea toward known enemies; toward ſuch who never did him any good, or can ever be able to do any; yea even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be preſumed ready to do more. Nothing in his Neighbour but abſence of need, nothing in himſelf but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his Beneficence; in that προθυμία (that proclivity and promptitude of mind) which St. *Paul* ſpeaketh of, he doth good every where; whereever a man is, there is a room for his wiſhing well, and doing good, if he can; he obſerves that rule of the Apoſtle, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto*

2 Cor 8.12.

Ubicunque homo eſt, ibi beneficio locus eſt. Sen. de Vit. B. cap 24.

Gal. 6.10.
2 Cor. 9 13.

unto all men: So the pious man hath *diſperſed*. It follows,

He hath given to the poor: Theſe words denote the freeneſs of his bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: He not only lendeth (though he alſo doth that upon reaſonable occaſion; for, *A good man*, as it is ſaid before in this Pſalm, *ſheweth mercy and lendeth*; and other where, *The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth*; he, I ſay, not only ſometimes willingly lendeth) to thoſe who in time may repay, or requite him; but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to thoſe from whom he can expect no retribution back. He doth not (as good and pious, he

Pſalm 112. 5.

Pſalm 37. 26.

he doth not) present the Rich; to do so, is but a cleanly way of begging, or a subtle kind of trade; 'tis hardly courtesie, 'tis surely no bounty; for such persons (if they are not very fordid or very careless, and such men are not usually much troubled with presents) will it is likely over-do him, or at least will be even with him in kindness; in doing this, there is little virtue; for it, there will be small reward: for, *If you do good to them who do good to you*; (or whom you conceive able and disposed to requite you) ποια χαρις; *what thanks* are due to you? for that (saith our Saviour) *even sinners* (even men notoriously bad) *do the same*: *And if you lend*

Qui diviti donat, petit.

Luk. 6. 33, 34.

lend to them, from whom you hope to receive, what thank have you? for sinners even lend to sinners, to receive as much again. All men commonly, the bad no less than the good, are apt to be superfluously kind in heaping favours on those, whom Fortune befriends, and whose condition requires not their courtesie; every one almost is ready to adopt himself into the kinred, or to screw himself into the friendship of the wealthy and prosperous; but where kindness is of use, there it is seldom found; it is commonly so deaf, as not to hear when it is call'd; so blind, as not to discern its proper object, and natural season; (*The time of adversity for*

Ὅταν δ' ὁ δαίμων δῷ, τὸ χρὴ φίλων; Ἀρκεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὁ δοὺς ὠφελεῖν φίλων. Eurip. in Orest.

Τῶν εὐτυχούντων πάντες οἰκεῖοι συγγενεῖς.

Prov. 17. 17.

which

which a brother is born:) men disclaim alliance with the needy, and shun his acquaintance; so the Wise-man observed, *All the brethren of the poor do hate him, how much more do his friends go far from him?* Thus it is in vulgar practise; but the pious man is more judicious, more just, and more generous in the placing of his favours; he is courteous to purpose, he is good to those who need: He, as such, doth not make large entertainments *for his friends, his brethren, his kinred, his rich neighbours*, but observes that precept of our Lord, *When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompence*

Prov. 19.7,4. Ἐν πρᾶσσε· τὰ φίλων δ' οὐδὲν οὖν τις δυστυχῇ. Eurip.

Luk. 14 12,13.

pence thee; thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just. Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with a free heart and pure intention bestoweth his goods on the indigent, without designing any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himself; except from God, in Conscience, respect and love to whom he doth it.

It may be also material to observe the form of speech here used, in reference to the time: *He hath dispersed, and he hath given*; or, *he doth disperse, he doth give*, (for in the Hebrew Language the past and present times are not distinguished:) which manner of speaking may seem to intimate the reality, or the

certainty, and the conſtancy of his practiſe in this kind; for what is paſt or preſent, we are infallibly ſecure of; and in Morals, what one is ſaid to have done, or to do, is always underſtood according to habit, or cuſtom. It is not, *He will diſperſe, he will give*; that were no fit deſcription of a good man; to pretend, would be no argument of piety; thoſe words might import uncertainty, and delay in his practice: He that ſaith, *I will give*, may be fallacious in his profeſſions, may be inconſiſtent with his reſolutions; may wilfully or negligently let ſlip the due ſeaſon of performing it. Our good man is not a *Doſon* or *Will-give*, (like

(like that King of *Macedon*, who got that name from often signifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect;) he not only purposes well, and promises fairly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perseveres doing it upon every fit occasion. He puts not his neighbour into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuses, saying to him, (as it is in the *Proverbs*) *Go and come again, and the morrow I will give, when he hath it by him*: He bids him not have patience, or says unto him, *Depart in peace*, when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient; when hunger or cold do then

Prov. 3. 28.

Jam. 2. 16.

pinch him, when ſickneſs inceſſantly vexeth him, when preſent ſtreights and burthens oppreſs him; but he affordeth a ready, quick, and ſeaſonable relief.

He hath diſperſed and *given*, while he lives, not reſerving the diſpoſal of all at once, upon his death, or by his laſt Will; that unwilling Will, whereby men would ſeem to give ſomewhat, when they can keep nothing; drawing to themſelves thoſe commendations and thanks, which are only due to their Mortality; when as were they immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is *he hath freely diſperſed*, not an inevitable neceſſity will extort it from him;

it

it cannot be said of him, that he never does well, but when he dies: so he hath done it really and surely.

Avarus, nisi cùm moritur, nil rectè facit. *Laber.*

He also doth it constantly, through all the course of his life, whenever good opportunity presents it self: he doth it not by fits, or by accident, according to unstable causes or circumstances moving him, (when bodily temper or humour inclineth him, when a sad object makes vehement impression on him; when shame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others; when he may thereby promote some design, or procure some glory to himself) but his practice is constant and uniform,

being drawn from ſteady principles, and guided by certain rules; proceeding from reverence to God, and good will toward man; following the clear dictates, and the immutable Laws of Conſcience. Thus hath the pious man *diſperſed*, and *given to the poor*; and let thus much ſuffice for explicatory reflection upon the firſt words.

The main drift and purport of which, is to repreſent the liberal exerciſing of bounty and mercy, to be the neceſſary duty, the ordinary practiſe, and the proper character of a truly pious man; ſo that performing ſuch acts, is a good ſign of true piety; and omitting them, is a

certain

certain argument of ungodlineſs: for the demonſtration of which points, and for exciting us to a practice anſwerable, I ſhall propound ſeveral Conſiderations, whereby the plain reaſonableneſs, the great weight, the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its ſtrict connexion with other principal duties of piety, will appear. And firſt, I will ſhew with what advantage the Holy Scripture repreſents it to us, or preſſes it upon us.

I. Head of diſcourſe.

1. We may conſider, that there is no ſort of duties, which God hath more expreſly commanded, or more earneſtly inculcated, than theſe of bounty and mercy toward our bre-

thren; whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in Gods esteem may be inferred. Even in the ancient Law, we may observe very careful provisions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency prescribed: *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.*——— *Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, unto thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land*: so did *Moses*, in Gods Name, with language very significant and emphatical, enjoin to the children of *Israel*. The holy Prophets also do commonly with an especial heat and vigour press these duties,

Deut 15 7,10.

ties, moſt ſmartly reproving the tranſgreſſion or neglect of them; eſpecially when they reclaim men from their wicked courſes, urging them ſeriouſly to return unto God and goodneſs, they propoſe this practiſe as a ſingular inſtance moſt expreſſive of their converſion, moſt apt to appeaſe Gods wrath, moſt effectual to the recovery of his favour. *Waſh you,* Eſay 1. 16, 17, 18, ſaith God in *Eſay, make you clean,* Jer. 7. 5, 6. *put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well:* ſo in general he exhorts to repentance; then immediately he ſubjoins theſe choice inſtances thereof: *Seek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the*

the widow.— *Come now,* (then he adds) *let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* When *Daniel* would prescribe to King *Nebuchadnezzar* the best way of amendment, and the surest means of averting Gods judgments impendent on him, he thus speaks: *Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee,* * *break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*: this he cull'd out as of all pious acts chiefly grateful to God, and clearly testifying repentance; and, *so very impious a person was alms able to justifie,* says the Father thereupon.

Dan. 4. 27.

* Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι; so the LXX render those words, reading, it seems, פדה for פרק Ναβουχοδονόσορ, τὸν τοιοῦτον ἀσεβῆ, ἴσχυσεν ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη δικαιῶσαι. Athan. ad Antioch. Quæst. 87.

upon. So alſo when God himſelf would declare what thoſe acts are, which render penitential devotions moſt agreeable to him, and moſt effectual, he thus expreſſeth his mind: *Is not this the faſt, which I have choſen? to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burthens, to let the oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoak? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt out to thine houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh?* Of ſo great conſideration and moment was this ſort of duties, even under that old diſpenſation of weakneſs, ſervility and fear; Iſai. 58. 6, 7.

fear; ſo much tenderneſs of compaſſion and benignity did God exact even from that hard-hearted and worldly people, who were ſo little capable of the beſt rules, and had encouragements, in compariſon ſo mean, toward performances of this nature. The ſame we may well conceive, under the more perfect diſcipline of univerſal amity, of ingenuity, of ſpiritual grace and goodneſs, in a higher ſtrein, with more force and greater obligation to be impoſed on us, who have ſo much ſtronger engagements, and immenſly greater encouragements to them; and ſo indeed it is; for thoſe precepts delivered by our Lord, *Sell all*

Luk. 12 33. 6.30. 11.41.

that

that you have, and give alms; If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor; Give to every man that asketh thee; Treasure not up to your selves treasures upon the earth, do indeed sound high, but are not insignificant, or impertinent; they cannot signifie or design less, than that we should be always in affection, and disposition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the succour of our poor brethren; that to the utmost of our ability, (according to moral estimation prudently rated) upon all occasions we should really express that disposition in our practise; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exercise of these

Mat. 19. 21. 6. 19.

these duties in a very eminent degree: These indeed were the duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his discourse commend and prescribe, so he did most signally exemplifie in his practise; his whole life being in effect but one continual act of most liberal bounty and mercy toward mankind; in charity to whom, he outdid his own severest rules, being content never to possess any wealth, never to enjoy any ease in this world: and therein (both as to doctrine and practise) did the holy Apostles closely follow their Master; *As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing all things*; so they thoroughly in deeds practised

2 Cor. 6 10.

these

these duties, which in words they taught, and earnestly pressed; admonishing their converts to (a) *distribute to the necessities of the saints*, to (b) *do good to all men*, (c) *to do good, and to communicate not to forget*, to *shew mercy with cheerfulness*, to (d) *put on bowels of mercy*, to (e) *be kind, and tender-hearted one toward another*; to *abound in the grace of liberality*: Such are their Directions and Injunctions to all Christian people; so did they preach themselves, and so they enjoined others to preach: *Charge the rich in this world*, (saith St. *Paul* to his Scholar *Timothy*) *that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing*

a Rom. 12. 13.
b Gal. 6. 10.
c Heb. 13. 16.
d Colos. 3. 12.
e Ephes. 4. 32.
2 Cor. 8. 7.
1 Tim. 6. 7, 8.

to

Tit. 3. 8. *to communicate*: and, *These things* (saith he likewise advising Bishop *Titus*) *I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which believe in God may be careful to maintain good works*; what *good works* he meaneth, the reason adjoined doth shew; *for these things*, saith he, *are good and profitable unto men.*

2. It is indeed observable, that as in every kind that which is most excellent doth commonly assume to it self the name of the whole kind; so among the parts of righteousness, (which word is used to comprehend all vertue and goodness) this of exercising bounty and mercy is peculiarly called *righteousness*; so that *righteousness*

teousneſs and *mercifulneſs*, (or *alms-deeds*) the righteous and bountiful perſon are in Scripture-expreſſion ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undiſtinguiſhably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to righteouſneſs, and rewards promiſed to righteous perſons, hard to diſcern, whether the general obſervance of Gods Law, or the ſpecial practiſe of theſe duties are concerned in them. Likewiſe works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed *good Works*, and to perform them is uſually ſtiled *to do good*, and *to do well*,

c Act. 9. 36. 1 Tim. 5. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Tit. 3. 8, 14. 2 Cor. 9. 8. Gal. 6. b 9, a 10. d Luk. 6. 35. e Heb. 13. 16. f Act. 10. 38.

((a) ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, (b) καλὸν ποιεῖν, (c) ἀγαθοεργεῖν, (d) ἀγαθοποιεῖν, (e) εὐποιεῖν, (f) εὐεργετεῖν,

are words applyed to this purpose) which manners of expression do argue the eminent dignity of these performances.

3. We may also consequently mark, that in those places of Scripture, where the Divine Law is abridged, and Religion summ'd up into a few particulars of main importance, these duties constantly make a part: so when the Prophet *Micah* briefly reckons up those things, which are best in the Law, and chiefly required by God, the whole Catalogue of them consisting but of three particulars, *Mercy* comes in for one: *He hath shewed thee, O man,* (saith he) *what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to*

Micah 6. 8.

do

do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Likewise of those (βαρύτερα τῦ νόμυ, those) more substantial and *weighty things of Gods Law*, the neglect of which our Saviour objecteth as an argument of impiety, and a cause of wo, to those pretending Zealots, this is one: *Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye pay tythe of Mint and Cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.* The sum of St. *John* the Baptist his instruction of the people is by St. *Luke* reduced to this point: *The people asked him, saying, What shall we do?* He answering, saith unto them, *He that hath two Coats, let*

Mat.23.23.

Luk.3.11.

him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. St. *James* his Syſteme
Jam. 1.27. of Religion is this: *Pure and undefiled Religion before God and the Father is this; to viſit the fatherleſs and widow in their affliction*, (that is, to comfort and relieve all diſtreſſed and helpleſs perſons) *and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.* St *Paul* ſeems to be yet more compen-
Gal. 6.2. dious and cloſe: *Bear ye* (ſaith he) *one anothers burthens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.* Yea, God himſelf comprizeth all the ſubſtantial part of Religion herein, when comparing it with the circumſtantial part, he ſaith,
Hoſ. 6.6. *I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice.*

4. It

4. It is in like manner considerable, that in the general descriptions of piety and goodness, the practise of these duties is specified, as a grand ingredient of them. In this *Psalm*, where such a description is intended, it is almost the only particular instance; and it is not only mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expression. In the 37 Psalm it is affirmed, and repeated, that *The righteous sheweth mercy; he sheweth mercy, and giveth; he sheweth mercy, and lendeth.* In the *Proverbs*, 'tis a commendation of the vertuous woman, *whose price is far above rubies*, that, *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, stretcheth forth* Psal 37.21,26. Prov. 31.20.

both her hands to the needy. And in *Ezekiel* (which is especially remarkable) the 18 Chapter, where the principal things constituting a pious man are, more than once, professedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expressed, and taketh up much room in the accompt; of such a person (who *shall surely live and not die*; that is, who certainly shall abide in Gods favour, and enjoy the happy consequences thereof) it is supposed, that he—— *neither hath oppressed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath spoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; and hath taken off his hand from the poor.*

Ezek. 18. 7, 16.

5. Also

5. Alſo in the particular Hiſtories of good men, this ſort of practiſe is ſpecially taken notice of, and expreſſed in their characters. In the ſtory of our Father *Abraham*, his benignity to ſtrangers, and hoſpitableneſs is remarkable among all his deeds of goodneſs, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice. In this the Conſcience of *Job* did ſolace it ſelf, as in a ſolid aſſurance of his integrity: *I delivered the poor that cryed, and the fatherleſs, and him that had none to help him: The bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me, and I cauſed the widows heart to ſing: I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to* Heb. 13. 2. Job 29. 11, &c. Job 30 25.

the lame; I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor? Hence also did the good Publican recommend himself to the favour and approbation of our Saviour, saying, *Behold*, Lord, *half of my goods I give to the poor*; hence did *salvation come to his house*; hence he is proclaimed, *a son of* Abraham. Of *Dorcas*, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the Disciples, this is the commendation and character; *She was full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did*; such practise made her capable of that favour, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life;

Luk. 19. 8, 9.

Act. 9. 36.

life; at leaſt in St. *Chryſoſtome's* judgment: *The force of her alms*, ſaith he, *did conquer the tyranny of death.* *Cornelius* alſo, that excellent perſon, who was, though a *Gentile*, ſo acceptable to God, and had ſo extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus repreſented: *He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his houſe, who gave much alms to the people; and prayed to God alway.* We may add, that to be hoſpitable (one branch of theſe duties, and inferring the reſt) is reckoned a qualification of thoſe, who are to be the Guides and Patterns of goodneſs unto others: And particularly one fit to be promoted to a widows office in the *Church*, is

Ἡ τῆς ἐλεημοσύνης δύναμις ἐνίκησε τυραννίδα θανάτου. Chryſ. in Gen. Orat. 55.

Act. 10. 2.

1 Tim 3. 2. Tit. 1. 6.

1 Tim. 5. 10. is thus deſcribed: *Well reported of for good works; if ſhe have brought up children, if ſhe have lodged ſtrangers; if ſhe have waſhed the ſaints feet; if ſhe have relieved the afflicted; if ſhe have diligently followed every good work.*

6. So near to the heart of Piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practiſe of theſe duties; and no wonder; for it often expreſly declares Charity to be the fulfilling of Gods Law, as the beſt expreſſion of all our duty toward God, (of faith in him, love and reverence of him) and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our Neighbour. And of charity, works

Gal. 5. 14. Rom. 13 9, 10. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Mat. 7. 12.

works of bounty and mercy are both the chief instances, and the plainest signs; for whereas all charity doth consist either in mental desire, or in verbal signification, or in effectual performance of good to our Neighbour, this last is the end, the completion, and the assurance of the rest. Good will is indeed the root of charity; but that lies under-ground, and out of sight; nor can we conclude its being or life without visible fruits of beneficence: Good words are at best but fair leaves thereof, such as may (and too often do) proceed from a weak and barren disposition of mind; but these *good works* are *real fruits*, (so St. *Pauls* calls them;

Ἐπίτασις ἐλεημοσύνης ὁ ἅλς. Greg. Nyss. in Mat. 5. 7.

Let

Tit.3.14. Rom.15.28. Phil.4.17. *Let ours also*, saith he, *learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful*) which declare a true life, and a good strength of charity in the bearer of them: by them

2 Cor.8.8. τὸ γνήσιον τῆς ἀγάπης, *the sincerity* (or genuineness) *of our charity is proved*; for as no man ever doth impress a false stamp on the finest metal, so costly charity is seldom counterfeit: it is to decline spending their goods, or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wishing well, the defect of doing so; and paying words in stead of things: but he that freely imparts what he hath, or can do for his Neighbours good, needs no other argu-

argument to evince that he loves in good earneſt, nor can indeed well uſe any other: for words, if actions are wanting, ſeem abuſive; and if actions are preſent, they are ſuperfluous; wherefore St. *John* thus adviſes: *My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue,* (ἀλλ' ἔργῳ) *but in work and in truth*; to love in *work*, and to love in *truth*, he ſignifies to be the ſame thing; and to pretend love in ſpeech, without practiſing it in deed, he implies not allowable. And St. *James* in way of compariſon ſays, That as faith without works is dead, ſo love without beneficence is uſeleſs: for, *If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily food, and one of you* 1 Joh. 3. 18.

Jam. 2. 16.

ſay

say unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? even so faith without works is dead. Cold wishes of good, working no real benefit to our Neighbour, and a faint assent unto truth, producing no constant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or use. Charity then being the main point of Religion, mercy and bounty being the chief parts of charity, well may these duties be placed in so high a rank, according to the divine Heraldry of Scripture.

7. To enforce which Observations,

vations, and that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of these duties, we may consider, that to the observance of them most ample and excellent rewards are assigned; that in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best mercies and blessings to us. The best of all good things (that which in *Davids* opinion was better than life it self) the fountain of all blessings (Gods love, and favour or mercy) is procured thereby, or is annexed to it: for *God loveth a chearful giver*, saith S. *Paul*; and, *The merciful shall obtain mercy*, saith our Saviour; and, *Mercy rejoyceth against judgment* (or

Psal. 63. 3.

2 Cor. 9. 7.

Mat. 5. 7.

Jam. 2. 13.

(or boasteth, and triumpheth over it; ἔλεος κατακαυχᾶται κρίσεως; that is, it appeaseth Gods wrath, and prevents our condemnation and punishment) saith St. *James*; God will not continue displeased with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and merciful to his Neighbour. 'Tis true, if rightly understood, what the Hebrew Wise-man saith, *Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement of sins*: for this practice hath the nature and name of a Sacrifice, and is declared, as such, both in excellency and efficacy to surpass all other Sacrifices; to be most acceptable to God, most available for expiation of guilt, most effe-

Mat. 6. 14.

Ecclus. 3. 30.

effectual in obtaining mercy and favour. Other Sacrifices performed in obedience to Gods appointment, (on vertue of our Lords perfect obedience, and with regard to his pure sacrifice of himself) did in their way propitiate God, and atone sin; but this hath an intrinsick worth, and a natural aptitude to those purposes; other oblations did signifie a willingness to render a due homage to God, this really, and immediately performs it; they were shadows or images well resembling that duty, (parting with any thing we have for the sake of God, and for purchasing his favour) whereof this is the body and substance: this is there-

fore preferr'd as in it ſelf excel-
Hoſ. 6.6. ling the reſt, and more eſtima-
ble in Gods ſight; ſo that in
compariſon or competition
therewith, the other ſeem to be
Mic. 6 7. ſlighted and rejected. *I will* (ſaith God) *have mercy and not ſacrifice*; and, *Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thouſands of rivers of oyl?* Will he? that is, he will not be pleaſed with ſuch ſacrifices, if they be abſtracted from the more delightful ſacrifices of bounty and mercy. God never made an exception againſt theſe, or derogated from them in any caſe; they abſolutely
Phil. 4.18. and perpetually are (as St. *Paul* ſpeaketh) *Odours of a ſweet ſmell, ſacrifices acceptable and well-*

pleaſing

pleasing to God; and the Apostle to the Hebrews seconds him: *To do good*, saith he, *and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased*; by these, all other works, and all enjoyments are sanctified; for, *Give alms* (saith our Lord) *of what you have, and behold all things are pure unto you.* Such charitable persons are therefore frequently pronounced blessed, that is in effect enstated in a confluence of all good things: *Blessed is he that considereth the poor*, says the Psalmist; and, *He that hath a bountiful eye, is blessed*, saith *Salomon*; and, *He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he*, saith the Wise man again; and, *Blessed are the merciful*, saith

Heb. 13 8.

Luke 11.41.

Psal. 41.1.

Prov. 22.9.

14 21.

Mat. 5 7.

our Lord himself; so in gross and generally; particularly also, and in retail the greatest blessings are expressly allotted to this practise: prosperity in all our affairs is promised thereto;

Deut 15.10. *Thou* (saith *Moses*) *shalt surely give thy poor brother, and thine heart shall not be grieved, that thou givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.* Stability in a good condition is ordinarily consequent thereon; so the Prophet *Daniel* implies, when advising King *Nebuchadnezzar* to these works,

Dan 4 17. he adds, *If it may be a lengthning of thy tranquillity*: deliverance from evil incumbent, protecti-

on

on in imminent danger, and ſupport in afflictions, are the ſure rewards thereof; ſo the *Pſalmiſt* aſſures us: *Bleſſed* (ſaith he) *is he that conſidereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble; the Lord will preſerve him and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies; the Lord will ſtrengthen him upon the bed of languiſhing, thou wilt make all his bed in his ſickneſs.* Security from all want, is likewiſe a recompence proper thereto: for, *He that giveth to the poor, ſhall not lack*, ſaith the Wiſe-man: thriving in Wealth and Eſtate, is another ſpecial reward; for, *The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat*; Pſal. 41. 1, &c. Prov. 28. 27. Prov. 11 25.

the ſame Author gives us his word for it: even of the good things here below to thoſe, who for his ſake in this, or any other way, do *let go houſes or lands*, our Lord promiſeth the return of *a hundred fold*, either in kind, or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practiſe even in relation to the concernments of this tranſitory life; but to them beſide God hath deſtinated rewards incomparably more conſiderable and pretious; ſpiritual and eternal rewards, treaſures of heavenly wealth, crowns of endleſs glory, the perfection of joy and bliſs to be diſpenſed *at the reſurrection of the juſt*. *He that for my ſake hath left houſes*

Mat. 19 29.

Luke 14 13.

Mat. 19. 29. Mark 10. 30.

or

or lands, ſhall receive a hundred fold now at this time, (or in this preſent life) *and in the world to come ſhall inherit everlaſting life*; ſo infallible Truth hath aſſured us. They who perform theſe duties, are ſaid *to make themſelves bags, which wax not old; a treaſure that faileth not in the heavens*; to *make themſelves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who, when they fail,* (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth) *will receive them into everlaſting habitations*; to *lay up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*; ſuch rewards are promiſed to the obſervers.

Luke 12.33. Luke 16.9. 1 Tim. 6.19.

8 And correſpondently grie-

vous punishments are designed, and denounced to the transgressours of these duties; the worst of miseries is their portion and doom; they for being such do forfeit Gods love and favour; they lose his blessing and protection; they can have no sure possession of, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their Estate, for, *He* (saith St. *James*) *shall have judgment without mercy, who sheweth no mercy*: and of such a person it is said in *Job*, *That which he laboureth for he shall restore, and shall not swallow it down; according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein; because he hath oppressed, and forsaken the poor*; (not only because he hath unjustly

Jam. 2. 13.

Job 20. 18.

juſtly oppreſſed, but becauſe he hath uncharitably forſaken the poor:) If by the Divine forbearance ſuch perſons do ſeem to enjoy a fair *portion in this life*, (*proſpering in the world*, *and increaſing in riches*) they will find a ſad reckoning behind in the other world; this will be the reſult of that Audit: *Wo be unto you rich men*, *for you have received your conſolation*, (ſuch rich men are meant, who have got, or kept, or uſed their wealth baſely; who have detained all the conſolation it yields to themſelves, and imparted none to others;) and, *Remember, ſon, thou didſt receive thy good things in this life*; (ſo didſt receive them, as to ſwallow them, and

Pſal. 17. 14. Pſal. 73. 12. Luk. 6. 24. Luk. 16. 25.

ſpend

ſpend them here; without any proviſion or regard for the future in the uſe of them;) and,

Mat. 25. 30. *Caſt that unprofitable ſervant* (who made no good uſe of his Talent) *into utter darkneſs*:

Luk 12 21. ſuch will be the fate of *every one, that treaſures up to himſelf, and is not rich unto God*; not rich in piety and charity, not rich in performing for Gods ſake works of bounty and mercy.

9. It is indeed moſt conſiderable, that at the final reckoning, when all mens actions ſhall be ſtrictly ſcann'd, and juſtly ſentenced according to their true deſert, a ſpecial regard will be had to the diſcharge or neglect of theſe duties.

ties. It is the bountiful and merciful persons, who have relieved Christ in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the sheep at the right hand; and shall hear the good Shepherds voice uttering those joyful words, *Come ye blessed of my Father, enter into the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye cloathed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me:* He doth not say, because ye have made goodly professions, because you have been Ortho- Mat. 25. 34.

dox

dox in your opinions, becauſe you have frequented religious Exerciſes, (have prayed often and long, have kept many Faſts, and heard many Sermons) becauſe you have been ſtaunch in your converſations, becauſe you have been punctual in your dealings; becauſe you have maintained a ſpecious guiſe of piety, ſobriety, and juſtice, (although indeed he that will come off well at that great Trial, muſt be reſponſible, and able to yield a good accompt in reſpect to all thoſe particulars) but becauſe you have been charitably benign and helpful to perſons in need and diſtreſs; therefore bleſſed are you, therefore enter into the Kingdom of glori-

glorious bliſs prepared for ſuch perſons: this proceeding more than intimates, that in the judgment of our Lord no ſort of vertue or good practiſe is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty, or rather that in his eſteem none is equal thereto; ſo that if the Queſtion were put to him, which is one of them to *Antiochus*, (in *Athanaſius* his works) Which is the moſt eminent Vertue? Our Lord would reſolve it no otherwiſe, than is done by that Father, affirming, That Mercifulneſs is the Queen of Vertues; for that at the final accompt, the examination chiefly proceeds upon that; it is made the ſpecial Touchſtone of Piety, and Athan. Tom. 2.

and the peculiar ground of happineſs. On the other ſide, thoſe who have been deficient in theſe performances, (uncharitable and unmerciful perſons) will at the laſt Trial appear to be the wretched Goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable ſpeech ſhall by the great Judge be pronounced: *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not*: It is not, we may ſee, for having done that, which in this world

Mat. 25. 41.

is

is called rapine or wrong; for having pillaged, or cozened their Neighbour; for having committed Adultery or Murther, or any other thing prohibited, that these unhappy men are said to be formally impeached, and finally condemned to that miserable doom, but for having been unkind and unmerciful to their poor brethren: this at that high Tribunal will pass for a most enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is, that they shall be cursed, and cast down into a wretched consortship with those malicious and merciless Fiends, unto whose disposition they did so nearly approach.

Ὀυκ ὅτι διηρπάκασιν, οὐδ' ὅτι σεσυλήκασιν, οὐ μεμοιχεύκασιν, ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν ἀπηγορευμένων πεποιήκασιν, ταύτην τὴν τάξιν κατακριθέντες, ἀλλ' ὅτι μὴ χρηστὸν διὰ τῶν δεομένων τεθεραπεύκασιν. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

Thus

Thus it appears how mighty a ſtreſs God in the holy Scripture doth lay upon theſe duties, ſo peremptorily commanding them, ſo vehemently preſſing them, ſo highly commending them, ſo graciouſly by promiſes alluring us to the performance, ſo dreadfully by threatnings deterring us from the neglect of them: what an affront then will it be to Gods Authority, what a diſtruſt to his Word, what a contempt of his Power, his Juſtice, his Wiſdom, what a deſpight to his Goodneſs and Mercy, if notwithſtanding all theſe Declarations of his will and purpoſes, we ſhall preſume to be uncharitable in this kind? There are

alſo Conſiderations (very many, very clear, and very ſtrong) which diſcover the great reaſonableneſs and equity of theſe Laws, with our indiſpenſable obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact theſe duties from us, and do more earneſtly plead in the poor mans behalf, than he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down upon our poor Neighbour; if we reflect upon our ſelves, or conſider our wealth it ſelf, every where we may diſcern various reaſons obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practiſe of theſe duties.

In regard to God,

II. Head of Discourse.

1. We may consider, that by exercising of bounty and mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himself; by neglecting those duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himself. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently professeth himself their especial Friend, Patron and Protector; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his Providence with their support: in effect therefore they shall surely be provided for, one way or other,

(The

(*The poor ſhall eat and be ſatisfied; God will ſave the afflicted people; The Lord preſerveth the ſtrangers, he relieveth the fatherleſs and widow*) but out of goodneſs to us, he chuſeth (if it may be, we freely concurring therein) and beſt liketh, that it ſhould be done by our hands; this conducing no leſs to our benefit, than to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to ſhew our reſpect to himſelf, and to lay an engagement on him to do us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own Name, and alloweth him to crave our ſuccour for his ſake; (when the poor man asketh us in Gods Name, or for Gods ſake, he doth not uſurp or forge,

Pſal. 22. 26. 18. 27. 146. 9.

he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing ſo) God gives him credit from himſelf unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his own accompt; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtor; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to ſatisfie us: *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again,* ſaith the Wiſe-man; and, *In as much as ye have done it to the leaſt of my brethren, ye have done it unto me,* ſaith our Saviour: and, *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have ſhewed toward his Name,*

Prov. 19.17.

Mat 25.40,45.

Heb. 6 10.

Name, in that ye have miniſtred to the ſaints, and do miniſter, ſaith the Apoſtle. What therefore we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expreſſion of kindneſs to himſelf, being given to one of his friends and clients, in reſpect to him; he regards it as a teſtimony of friendly confidence in him, ſignifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods ſafe enough in his cuſtody. But if we ſtop our ears, or ſhut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harſh repulſe, and a heinous affront put upon himſelf; we

doing it to one, who bears his Name, and wears his Livery, (for the poor mans rags are badges of his relation unto God) He thereby judges, that we have little good will, little reſpect, little compaſſion toward himſelf, ſince we vouchſafe not to grant him ſo mean a favour, ſince we refuſe at his requeſt, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a ſmall ſum, he juſtly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have ſorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good Correſpondent, little valuing his word, ſuſpecting his goodneſs, his truth, or his ſufficiency.

2. We by practiſing thoſe duties

duties are juſt, by omitting them are very unjuſt toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our eſtate, are indeed none of them ſimply or properly our own, ſo that we have an abſolute property in them, or an entire diſpoſal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of ſuch a right unto them, or power over them; God neceſſarily is the true and abſolute Proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God, but we muſt not underſtand that God by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them; they are depoſited with us in truſt, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as Stewards, not transferred upon

Eccleſ 5. 19. 6. 2.

us as Masters: they are so ours, that we have no authority to use them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to Gods direction and order. He by right immutable is Lord Paramount of all his Creation; every thing unalienably belongs to him, upon many accompts: He out of nothing made all things at first, and to every Creature through each moment a new being is conferr'd by his preservative influence; originally therefore he is Lord of all things, and continually a new Title of Dominion over every thing springeth up unto him: it is his always, because he always maketh it. We our selves

are

are naturally meer Slaves and Vaſſals to him: as we can never be our own, (Maſters of our ſelves, of our lives, of our liberties) ſo cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no poſſible means by which we can acquire any abſolute Title to the leaſt mite; the principal right to what we ſeem to get, according to all Law and Reaſon, accrueth to our Maſter. All things about us, by which we live, with which we work and trade; the Earth which ſupports and feeds us, and furniſheth us with all commodities; the Air we breathe, the Sun and Stars which cheriſh our life, are all of them his, his Productions, and

Pſal. 24. 1. 50. 12. 89. 11. 95. 5.

and his Poſſeſſions, ſubſiſting by his pleaſure, ſubject to his diſpoſal: how then can any thing be ours? how can we ſay with the fooliſh Churl *Nabal*, *Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh, and give it?* Thine? O inconſiderate man! How cam'ſt thou by it? how doſt thou hold it? didſt thou make it, or doſt thou preſerve it? Canſt thou claim any thing by Nature? No, thou broughteſt nothing with thee into the world, thou didſt not bring thy ſelf hither: Canſt thou challenge any thing to thy ſelf from Chance? No, for there is no ſuch thing as Chance, all things being guided and governed by Gods Providence.

1 Sam. 25. 11.

Sed ais; Quid injuſtum eſt, ſi cùm aliena non invadam, propria diligentiùs ſervem? O impudens dictum! propria dicis? quæ? ex quibus reconditis in hunc mundum detuliſti? *Ambroſ.*

vidence. Doſt thou conceive thy Induſtry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art miſtaken, for all the wit and ſtrength thou applieſt, the head thou contriveſt with, and the hands thou workeſt with, are Gods; all the ſucceſs thou findeſt did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labours would be fruitleſs, did not he aſſiſt and bleſs thee: Thou doſt vainly and falſly *lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, whenas thy heards and flocks multiply, and thy ſilver and gold is multiplyed, and all that thou haſt is multiplied;* if *thou ſayeſt in thy heart, My power and the might of my hand*

Deut. 8. 13, 14, 17. 18.

hand hath gotten me this wealth: But thou must remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth. Since then upon all scores every thing we have doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recal or resume whatever he pleaseth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot justly use it otherwise than he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwise than to his interest and service. God then having injoined, that after we have satisfied our necessities, and supplied our reasonable occasions, we should imploy the rest to the relief of our poor Neighbours; that *if we have two coats,* (one more than we need) *we should*

Aliena rapere convincitur, qui ultra necessaria sibi retinere probatur. *Hieron.*

Quicquid Deus plusquam opus est dederit, non nobis specialiter dedit, sed per nos aliis erogandum transmisit, quòd si non dederimus, res alienas invasimus. *Aug. Serm. 219. de Temp.* Luk. 3. 11.

should impart one to him that hath none; if we have meat abundant, that we *likewise* communicate to him that wants it: God by the poor mans voice (or by his need and misery) demanding his own from us, we are very unjust if we *presume* to withhold it; doubly unjust we are, both toward God, and toward our Neighbour: we are unfaithful Stewards, misapplying the goods of our Master, and crossing his order: we are wrongful Usurpers, detaining from our Neighbour that which God hath allotted him: we are in the Court of Conscience, we shall appear at the Bar of Gods Judgment no better than Robbers, (under vizards of legal right

Proprium nemo dicat quod commune; plusquam sufficeret sumptui violenter obtentum est. *Ambros.*

Σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἀποστερητὴς, ἃ πρὸς οἰκονομίαν ἐδέξω, ταῦτα ἴδια σαυτοῦ ποιούμενος; Bas. M.

right and poſſeſſion) ſpoiling our poor Brother of his goods; his, I ſay, by the very ſame title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expreſſed, as we have ſeen, in his holy Word: (he cannot take it away by violence or ſurreption againſt our will, but we are bound willingly to yield it up to him; to do that, were diſorder in him; to refuſe this, is wrong in us:) 'tis the hungry mans bread, which we hoard up in our barns; 'tis his meat, on which we glut; and his drink, which we guzzle: 'tis the naked mans apparel, which we ſhut up in our preſſes, or which we exorbitantly ruffle and

Noſtrum eſt pauperes clamant quod effunditis; nobis crudeliter ſubtrahitur, quod inaniter expenditur. *Bern.*

and flaunt in: 'tis the needy perſons gold and ſilver which we cloſely hide in our cheſts, or ſpend idly, or put out to uſeleſs uſe: we are in thus holding, or thus ſpending, truly πλεονέκται, not only covetous, but wrongful, or havers of more than our own, againſt the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of *Salomon*, *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thy hand to do it.* Prov. 3. 27.

If we are ambitious of having a property in ſomewhat, or affect to call any thing our own, 'tis only by nobly giving that we can accompliſh our deſire, that will certainly appropriate our goods to our uſe and benefit:

Omne quod malè poſſidetur alienum eſt; male autem poſſider, qui malè utitur. *Auguſt.*

fit: but from baſely keeping, or vainly embezilling them, they become not our poſſeſſion and enjoyment, but our theft and our bane. (Theſe things, ſpoken after the holy Fathers, wiſe Inſtructors in matters of piety, are to be underſtood with reaſonable temperament, and practiſed with honeſt prudence. I cannot ſtand to diſdiſcuſs caſes, and remove ſcruples; a pious Charity will eaſily diſcern its due limits and meaſures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty: the ſum is, that juſtice towards God and man obligeth us, not to ſuffer our poor Brother to periſh, or pine away for want, when we ſurfeit and ſwim in plenty;

plenty; or not to see him lack necessaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

3. Shewing bounty and mercy are the most proper and the principal expressions of our gratitude unto God; so that in omitting them, we are not only very unjust, but highly ingrateful. Innumerable are the benefits, favours and mercies, (both common and private) which God hath bestowed on us, and doth continually bestow; he incessantly showres down blessings on our heads; he *daily loadeth us with his benefits*; he perpetually *crowneth us with loving kindness and tender mercies*: all that we are, all that we have, all that we can

Psal. 68. 19.

Psal. 103. 4.

hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty; our beings and lives, with all the conveniencies and comforts of them, we entirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preserver, our constant Benefactor: all the excellent priviledges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Christians, we also stand endebted for purely to his undeserved mercy and grace; and,

Psal. 116. 12. *What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us?* Shall we render him nothing? shall we refuse him any thing? shall we boggle at making returns so inconsiderable, in regard to what he hath done for us? What is a little Gold, or Silver, or Brass perhaps, which our

our poor Neighbour craveth of us, in compariſon to our life, our health, our reaſon, to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favour of God, to the pardon of our ſins, to the gifts of Gods Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God, and heirs of ſalvation; to the being freed from extream miſeries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpreſſible goodneſs, do not all theſe ineſtimable benefits require ſome correſpondent thankfulneſs? Are we not obliged, ſhall we not be willing to exhibit ſome real teſtimony thereof? And

what other can we exhibit beſide this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot ſo receive any thing from us; he is not capable of being himſelf enriched or exalted, of being any wiſe pleaſured or bettered by us, who is in himſelf infinitely ſufficient, glorious, joyful and happy: *Our goodneſs extends not to him*; *A man cannot be profitable to his Maker*: All that we can do in this kind, is thus indirectly, in the perſons of his poor relations, to gratifie him, imparting at his deſire and for his ſake ſomewhat of what he hath beſtowed on us, upon them. Such a thankful return we owe unto God, not only for

Pſal. 16. 2.
Job 22. 2.

what

what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of those who can afford relief, and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and prosperous state should not seem to us so contemptible things, that we should be unwilling to render somewhat back in grateful resentment for them: the very act of giving is it self no mean benefit, (having so much of honor in it, so much of pleasure going with it, so much of reward following it) we receive far more than we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit, that we should return our gratitude, and consequently that we should perform these

Δός τι θεῷ χαριστήριον ὅτι τῶν ἐν ποιεῖν δυναμένων ἐγένου, ἀλλ' οὐ τῶν ἐν παθεῖν δεομένων. Naz.

Nec enim homo Deo præstat beneficium in his, quæ dederit; sed Deus his homini, quæ acceperit. *Salvian.*

duties: for indeed without this practise, no other expression of gratitude can be true in it self, or can be acceptable unto God: We may seem abundantly to thank him in words, but a sparing hand gives the lye to the fullest mouth; we may spare our breath, if we keep back our substance; for all our praising God for his goodness, and blessing him with our lips, if we will do nothing for him, if we will not part with any thing for his sake, appears meer complement, is in truth plain mockery, and vile hypocrisie.

4. Yea, which we may farther consider, all our devotion severed from a disposition of practising these duties, is no less such;

ſuch; cannot have any true worth in it, ſhall not yield any good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably diſpoſed, what are they other than demonſtrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face preſume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requeſting a ſmall matter from us? How can we with any reaſon expect any mercy from him, when we vouchſafe not to ſhew any mercy for his ſake? Can we imagine, that God will hearken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his entreaties, and regardleſs of his deſires? No; 'tis his declaration to ſuch bold and unreaſon-

Isai.1.15. able petitioners, *When you spread forth your hands, I will not hear you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear*: No importunity, no frequency of prayers will move God in such a case; the needy mans cries and complaints will drown their noise; his sighs and groans Jam.5.4. will obstruct their passage, and stop the ears of God against them. Likewise all our semblances of repentance, all our corporal abstinencies & austerities, if a kind and merciful disposition are wanting, what are they truly but presumptuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not grosly collude with sin, when we restrain the sensual

appe-

appetites of the body, but foment the souls more unreasonable desires? when we curb our wanton flesh, and give license to a base spirit? Do we not palpably baffle, when in respect to God, we pretend to deny our selves, yet upon urgent occasion allow him nothing? Do we not strangely prevaricate, when we would seem to appease Gods anger, and purchase his favour by our submissions, yet refuse to do that, which he declares most pleasing to him, and most necessary to those purposes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to serve God, and thus to delude themselves: *I have known many*, (saith St. *Basil*) *who have fasted*,

Οἶδα πολλοὺς νηστεύοντας, προσευχομένους, στενάζοντας,

πᾶσαν τὴν ἀδάπανον ἐολάβοιαν ἐνδεικνυμένους, ὀβολὸν δὲ ἕνα μὴ προιεμένους τοῖς θλιβομένοις. Bas. M. in Luk 12.8.

fasted, and prayed, and groaned, and expressed all kind of costless piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted: such a cheap and easie piety, which costs us little or nothing, can surely not be worth much; and we must not conceit that the All-wise God, (*the God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed*, as *Anna* sang; and, who *weigheth the spirits* also, as the Wise-man saith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more than its just value. No, he hath expresly signified, that he hath *not chosen* such services, nor doth take any pleasure in them; he hath called them *vain and impertinent oblations*; not *sweet* or *acceptable*, but *abominable* and *trouble-*

1 Sam. 2.3.

Prov 16.2.

2 Sam. 24.24.

Isai. 58.5. 1.13,14. Mic. 6.7. Jer. 6.13,20.

troubleſome to him, ſuch as he *cannot away with*, and *is weary to bear.* 'Tis *religious liberality* that doth prove us to be ſerious and earneſt in other *religious performances*; which aſſures that we value matters of piety at a conſiderable rate; which gives a ſubſtance and ſolidity to our devotions; which ſanctifies our faſts, and verifies our penances; which renders our praiſes real, and our prayers effectual; ſo that theſe being combined, we may reaſonably expect acceptance and recompence; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good *Cornelius*, *Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.* Act. 10. 4.

5. The

5. The conſcionable practiſe of theſe duties, doth plainly ſpring from thoſe good diſpoſitions of mind, regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true piety; and the neglect of them iſſueth from thoſe vitious diſpoſitions, which have a peculiar inconſiſtency with piety, being deſtructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the Fundamental Grace, upon which Piety is grounded; Love and fear of God, are the Radical Principles, from which it grows; all which as the charitable man diſcovers in his practiſe, ſo they are apparently baniſhed from the heart of the illiberal and unmerciful perſon. As

As for Faith, the good man in ſhewing bounty, exerciſeth the chief acts thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, becauſe he truſteth on Gods Providence more than them; and believeth God more ready to help him, than any Creature can do, in his need; becauſe he is perſwaded, that God is moſt good and benign, ſo as never to ſuffer him to be oppreſſed with want; becauſe he taketh God to be juſt and faithful, who having charged him *to care for nothing, but to caſt his care and burthen upon the Lord*, having promiſed *to care for him*, to *ſuſtain him*, *never to leave or forſake him*; having alſo engaged himſelf to repay and recompence

Mat. 6. 25. Phil. 4. 6.

1 Pet. 5. 7.

Pſal. 55. 23. Heb. 13. 5.

compence him for what he giveth to his poor Neighbour, will not fail to make good his word; becauſe he thinks God abundantly ſolvent, and himſelf never the poorer for laying out in his behalf; becauſe, in ſhort, he is content to live in a dependence upon God, and at his diſpoſal. It is mentioned by the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews*, as a ſpecial inſtance of a reſolute and conſtant faith in the firſt Chriſtians, that *they took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing in themſelves, that they had in heaven a better and an enduring ſubſtance*: he that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free reſignation for the

Heb. 10. 34.

ſervice

ſervice of God, delivereth them up with the ſame alacrity, opinion and hope, thereby demonſtrates the ſame faith. But the *Gripple Wretch*, who will beſtow nothing on his poor Brother for Gods ſake, is evidently an Infidel, having none at all, or very heatheniſh conceits of God: He muſt be either a meer Atheiſt, disbelieving the exiſtence of God; or an Epicurean, in his heart denying Gods Providence over humane affairs: (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what paſſes here, how could he be afraid of wanting upon this ſcore? how could he repoſe any confidence in theſe poſſeſſions? how could

could he think himſelf ſecure in ſuch a neglect or defiance of God?) Or he muſt be exceedingly profane, entertaining moſt diſhonourable and injurious apprehenſions of God: He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not only in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to ſuffer for ſpending upon his accompt; very unjuſt, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithful, in breaking his word; very deceitful, in gulling us of our things by fair promiſes of reſtitution and requital: Or he muſt apprehend God forgetful of what we do, and himſelf ſays; or that he is needy and impotent, not having where-

with

with to make ſatisfaction, not being able to make good what he pretends. He muſt in his conceit debaſe God even beneath the vileſt Creatures, thinking a ſenſeleſs lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, than God can be with all his power and care; ſuppoſing his money ſafer in his own Coffers, than in Gods hands; and that Iron Bars will guard it more ſurely, than divine protection; eſteeming his Neighbours Bond for much better ſecurity than Gods Word; and that a mortal man is far more able or more true, than the Eternal Lord. He certainly cannot think one word true, that God ſays, being loath to truſt

him for a peny, for a piece of bread, or for an old garment; all Gods promiſes of recompence, and threatnings of puniſhment, he takes for idle fictions; Heaven and Hell are but *Utopia*'s in his conceit; the joys of one, offered to the charitable perſon, are but pleaſant fancies; the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearful dreams: all other things are but names, money and lands are the only real things unto him: all the happineſs he can conceive or wiſh, is contained in bags and barns; theſe are the ſole points of his Faith, and objects of his confidence. *He makes gold his hope, and ſaith to the fine gold, Thou*

Habac. 2. 9.

Thou art my confidence: he rejoyces becauſe his wealth is great, and becauſe his hand hath gotten much, (as *Job* ſpeaketh, diſclaiming that practiſe in himſelf, and tacitly charging it on the perſons we ſpeak of.) He doth in fine affect a total independency upon God, and cares to have no dealing with him; he would truſt to himſelf, and live on his own eſtate: ſo groſs infidelity, and horrible profaneneſs of mind, lie couched under this ſort of vices. Job 31. 24.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for Gods ſake he is willing to part with any thing; that he values Gods love and favour above all other goods; that he

deems himſelf rich and happy enough in the enjoyment of
1 Joh 3.17. God. But, *Who hath this worlds goods, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* ſaith St. *John*; that is, it is impoſſible he ſhould love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous thing for him to pretend it; for how poſſibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his ſake, and at his inſtance, part with a little worthleſs traſh, and dirty pelf? who prizes ſo inconſiderable matters beyond Gods favour and friendſhip? who prefers the keeping of his wealth, before the enjoyment of God; and chuſes

chuſes rather certainly to quit his whole intereſt in God, than to adventure a ſmall parcel of his eſtate with God? His practiſe indeed ſufficiently diſcovers, that his hard and ſtupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate and fond love, or dotage toward himſelf, ſince ſo preſent & ſenſible objects cannot affect him: *He that loveth not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* 1 Joh. 4 20.

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man expreſſes it in ſubmiſſion to Gods commands, although with his own preſent ſeeming diminution and loſs; in preferring the diſcharging of his

Conſcience before the retaining his Money; in caſting over-board his temporal goods, that he may ſecure his ſpiritual and eternal concernments: He can ſay (his practiſe atteſting to his profeſſion) with *David*, Pſal. 119 127, 72. *I love thy commandments above gold*; and, *The law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thouſands of gold and ſilver*; he ſhews, that Exod. 18. 21. he *is a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetouſneſs*; which diſpoſitions, as having much affinity and connexion, are well joined together by *Jethro*. But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes; ſince the commands of God have no efficacy on his Conſcience; ſince he dreads not the

the effects of divine power and justice, provoked by his disobedience; since he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worse than a certain commission of sin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, than of damnation hereafter.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, because his heart is possessed with vain devotion toward somewhat beside God, which in effect is his sole Divinity: he is justly stiled an Idolater, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind upon an Idol of Clay, which he loves with all his heart and all his

Col. 3. 5. Ephes. 5. 5.

ſoul, which he entirely confides in, which he eſteems and worſhips above all things. It is Mammon, which of all the Competitors and Antagoniſts of God, invading Gods right, and uſurping his place, is (as our Lord intimates) the moſt dangerous, and deſperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true Religion is quite excluded; *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Other vitious inclinations combat reaſon, and often baffle it, but ſeldom ſo vanquiſh it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himſelf in his miſcarriages; but the covetous humour ſeizeth on our reaſon it ſelf, and ſeateth it ſelf therein; inducing it to favour

Mat. 6. 24.

vour and countenance what is done amiſs: the voluptuous man is ſwayed by the violence of his appetite, but the covetous is ſeduced by the dictate of his judgment; he therefore ſcrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, becauſe he eſteems wealth the beſt thing in the world, and then judges himſelf moſt wiſe, when he is moſt baſe: *Labour not to be rich, ceaſe from thine own wiſdom*, ſaith *Salomon*; intimating the judgment ſuch perſons are wont to make of their riches: whence of all diſpoſitions oppoſite to piety, this is the moſt pernicious. But farther, Prov. 23. 4.

6. Let us conſider, That nothing is more conformable to Gods

Gods nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; and that consequently nothing can be more grateful to him; that nothing is more disagreeable and contrary to the essential disposition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulness, and therefore that nothing can be more distastful to him. What is any being in the world, but an efflux of his bounty, and an argument of his liberality? Look every where about Nature, consider the whole tenour of Providence; survey all the works, and scan all the actions of God, you will find them all conspiring in attestation to those sweet Characters and Elogies, which

which the holy Scripture ascribeth to God, representing him to be *Merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness*; to be *sorry for evil*, (incident or inflicted upon any Creature) to *delight in mercy*, to *wait that he may be gracious*; stiling him the *God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all consolation*; *the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels*; affirming of him, and by manifold evident evidences demonstrating, that he is *benign even unto the ingrateful and evil*; that *He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*. Nature, (I say) Providence and Revelation, do all concur in testifying this, that there

Exod. 34 6. Joel 2.13. Mic. 7.18. Isai. 30.18. Rom. 5.33. 13.5. Ephes. 2.4. 2 Cor. 13.11. 1. 3. Jam. 5.11. 1 Pet. 5.10. Luk 6.35. Psal. 145.9.

Θεοῦ πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν οὕτως ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιώτατον. Naz. Orat. 26.

there is nothing in God so peculiarly admirable, nothing (as it were) so God-like; that is, so highly venerable and amiable, as to do good and shew mercy. We therefore by liberal communication to the needy, do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate his practise; acquiring to our selves thereby somewhat of Divinity, and becoming little Gods to our Neighbour: *Nothing* (saith St. *Chrysostome*) *maketh us so near equal to God, as beneficence*; and, *Be* (saith St. *Gregory Nazianzen*) *a God to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God so much as to do good.* That such hath

Deus est mortali juvare mortalem. *Plin. Nat. H. lib. 2.*

Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἴσους θεῷ ποιεῖ, ὡς τὸ εὐεργετεῖν. Chrys. in Mat. Orat. 35.

Γένου τῷ ἀτυχοῦντι θεὸς τὸν ἔλεον τοῦ θεοῦ μιμησάμενος· οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ὡς τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἄνθρωπος ἔχει θεοῦ Naz. Orat. 16.

hath always been the common apprehenſion of men, the practiſe of all times ſheweth, in that men have been ever apt to place their Benefactors among their Gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degree, which in perfection do appertain to the ſupreme Benefactor. *Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful*; ſo our Saviour propoſeth Gods mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulneſs; implying it alſo to be a good ſign declaring us the children of God; the genuine off-ſpring of the all-good and all-merciful Father; yea, that it even renders and conſtitutes us ſuch, (we Luk. 6. 35, 36.

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thereby coming moſt truly to repreſent, and moſt nearly to reſemble him.) Our Lord farther teaches us, ſaying, *Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to thoſe that hate you —— that you may be the ſons of your Father which is in heaven.* And they who thus are Gods children, muſt conſequently be very dear to him, and moſt gracious in his ſight; he cannot but greatly like and love himſelf (the beſt of himſelf) in them; he cannot but cheriſh and treat them well, who are the faireſt and trueſt images of himſelf; no ſpectacle can be ſo pleaſant to him, as to ſee us in our practiſe to act himſelf, doing good to one

Mat. 5. 44, 45.

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another; *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Chriſt forgave us,* being *followers of God as dear children, and walking in love, even as Chriſt alſo loved us.* But on the other ſide, there is not in Nature any thing ſo remotely diſtant from God, or ſo extreamly oppoſite to him, as a greedy and griping Niggard; Hell is ſcarce ſo contrary to Heaven, as ſuch a mans diſpoſition to the nature of God; for 'tis *goodneſs* which ſits glorioufly triumphant at the top of Heaven; and *uncharitableneſs* lieth miſerably grovelling

Coloſ. 3. 12.

Epheſ. 5. 1, 2.

velling under the bottom of Hell: Heaven deſcends from the one, as its principal cauſe; Hell is built on the other, as its main foundation: as the one approximates the bleſſed Angels to God, and beatifies them; ſo the other removeth the curſed Fiends to ſuch a diſtance from God and happineſs: not to wiſh, not to do any good, is that which renders them both ſo bad, and ſo wretched; and whoever in his conditions is ſo like to them, and in his practiſe ſo agrees with them, cannot but alſo be very odious to God, and extreamly unhappy; God cannot but abhor ſo baſe a degeneration from his likeneſs in thoſe, who by nature are his children,

children, and ſhould be farther ſuch according to his gracious deſign; neither can any thing more offend his eyes, than ſeeing them to uſe one another unkindly: ſo that if obtaining the certain favour of the great God, with all the benefits attending it, ſeem conſiderable to us; or if we think it adviſeable to ſhun his diſpleaſure, with its ſad effects; it concerns us to practiſe theſe duties. So I conclude that ſort of Conſiderations, enforcing theſe duties, which more immediately regard God.

Farther, before we deny our relief to our poor Neighbour, let us with the eyes of our mind III. Head of Diſcourſe.

look on him, and attentively consider who he is; what he is in himself, and what he is in relation unto us.

1. He whose need craves our bounty, whose misery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly so mean and sorry a thing, as the disguise of misfortune, under which he appears, doth represent him. He who looks so deformedly and dismally, who to outward sight is so ill bestead, and so pitifully accoustred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory; he within himself containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal soul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly resembleth God

God himself, and is comparable to Angels; he invisibly is owner of endowments, rendring him capable of the greatest and best things: What are Money and Lands? what are Silk and fine Linen? what are Horses and Hounds in comparison to Reason, to Wisdom, to Vertue, to Religion, which he hath, or (in despight of all misfortune) he may have, if he please? He whom you behold so dejectedly sneaking, in so despicable a garb, so destitute of all convenience and comfort, (lying in the dust, naked or clad with rags, meagre with hunger or pain) he comes of a most high and heavenly extraction; he was born a Prince, the Son

of the greateſt King Eternal; he can truly call the Sovereign Lord of all the World his Father; having derived his ſoul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himſelf: (in this, *The rich and poor*, as the Wiſe-man ſaith, *do meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.*) That ſame forlorn Wretch, whom we are ſo apt to deſpiſe and trample upon, was framed and conſtituted Lord of the viſible World; had all the goodly brightneſſes of Heaven, and all the coſtly furnitures of Earth created to ſerve him: (*Thou madeſt him*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt* of man) *to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou haſt put all things under his feet*:)

Prov. 22. 2.

Gen. 1. 28.

Pſal. 8 6.

Yea,

Yea, he was made an inhabitant of Paradiſe, and Poſſeſſour of felicities ſuperlative; had immortal life, and endleſs joy in his hand; did enjoy the entire favour and friendſhip of the moſt High: ſuch in worth of Nature, and nobleneſs of Birth he is, as a man; and highly more conſiderable he is, as a Chriſtian: for as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath ſo regarded and prized him, as for his ſake to deſcend from Heaven, to cloath himſelf with fleſh, to aſſume the form of a ſervant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greateſt inconveniencies, infirmities, wants and diſgraces; the moſt grievous troubles, and moſt

ſharp pains incident to mortal nature; God hath adopted him to be his Child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him Brother; he is a Member of Chriſt, a Temple of the Holy Ghoſt, a free Denizon of the heavenly City; an Heir of Salvation, and Candidate of eternal Glory; the greateſt and richeſt Perſonage is not capable of better priviledges, than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments, than God hath deſigned him to: He equally with the mightieſt Prince is the object of Gods eſpecial Providence and Grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good *Elihu* ſaith, *accepteth not*

Job 34.19.

the

the persons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands. In fine, this poor Creature whom thou seest, is a man, and a Christian, thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition; I say not in the uncertain and unstable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly state, which is very inconsiderable; but in gifts vastly more pretious, in title to an estate infinitely more rich and excellent: yea, if thou art vain and proud, he sober and humble, he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth surpassing thee: for, *Better is the poor that walketh in his* Prov. 28. 6.

uprightneſs, than he that is perverſe in his ways, though he be rich.

2. That diſtinction, which thou ſtandeſt upon, and which ſeemeth ſo vaſt between thy poor Neighbour and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not any wiſe natural, or according to primitive deſign: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, ſo were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all conſtituted in a moſt proſperous and plentiful eſtate; all things at firſt were promiſcuouſly expoſed to the uſe and enjoyment of all; every one from the common ſtock aſſuming as his own what he needed.

ed. Inequality and private interest in things, (together with sicknesses and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniencies) were the by-blows of our fall; sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and enclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendred so much strife among men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were (I say) brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so charitable

Πενία καὶ πλοῦτος, ἐλευθερία τε, ἥν φαμεν καὶ δουλεία, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ὀνομάτων, ὕστερον ἐπεισῆλθεν τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥσπερ ἀῤῥηστήματα τῇ κακίᾳ συνεισπεσόντα, κακείνης ὄντα ἐπινοήματα. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

as

as we ſhould be, they could hardly ſubſiſt, eſpecially in that meaſure they do. God indeed (for promoting ſome good ends, and for prevention of ſome miſchiefs, apt to ſpring from our ill nature in this our lapſed ſtate; particularly to prevent the ſtrife and diſorder which ſcrambling would cauſe among men, preſuming on equal right, and parity of force) doth ſuffer them in ſome manner to continue, and enjoins us a contented ſubmiſſion to them; but we miſtake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is ſo cantonized among ſome few, that the reſt have no ſhare

Ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ὁ θεάτρῳ θεὰν καταλαβὼν εἶτα ἐσείργοι τοὺς ἐπεισόντας ἴδιον ἑαυτοῦ κείνων τὸ κοινὸν πᾶσι κατὰ τὴν γεῦσιν προκείμενον· τοιοῦτόν εἰσι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι· τὸ γὰρ κοινὰ προκατάσχοντες ἰδιοποιοῦνται διὰ τὴν πρόληψιν.
Basil. M.

ſhare therein; No, every man hath ſtill a competent patrimony due to him, and a ſufficient proviſion made for his tolerable ſubſiſtence; God hath brought no man hither to be neceſſarily ſtarved, or pinched with extream want; but hath aſſigned to every one a Childs portion, in ſome fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right, or by humble requeſt, which according to Conſcience ought to have effect. No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to deſtroy ſuperfluouſly what another man apparently wants, but is obliged to impart it to him: ſo that rich men are indeed but the Treaſurers, the Stewards, the Caterers of God

Incaſ-ùm ſe innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus ſibi privatum vindicant. *Greg. M.*

Mat. 24. 45.

God for the reſt of men, having
Luk. 12. 42. a ſtrict charge to *diſpenſe unto every one his meat in due ſeaſon*, and no juſt priviledge to withhold it from any: the honour of diſtribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reſerved to the poor, as a proviſion for their neceſſity. Thus hath God wiſely projected, that all his Children ſhould both effectually and quietly be provided for; and that none of them ſhould be
2 Cor. 8 14. oppreſſed with penury; ſo that (as St. *Paul* hath it) *One mans abundance ſhould ſupply another mans want, that there may be an equality*: for ſince no man can enjoy more than he needs, and

every

every man ſhould have ſo much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the diſtinction will ſcarce remain other where than in fancy. What the Philoſopher ſaid of himſelf, *What I have, is ſo mine, that it is every mans*, is according to the practiſe of each man, who is truly and in due meaſure charitable; whereby that ſeemingly enormous diſcrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of Divine Providence is vindicated: But he that ravenouſly graſps far more than he can well uſe, and gripes it faſt in his clutches, ſo that the needy in their diſtreſs cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity

Ego mea ſic habeo, ut omnium ſint. *Demetrius apud Sen. de Benef. VII. 10.*

Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν πλησίον ὡς ἑαυτὸν, οὐδὲν πλεονεκτήσει τοῦ πλησίον. Baſil. M.

equity which God hath eſtabliſhed in things, defeats his good intention, (ſo far as he can) and brings a ſcandal on his Providence; and ſo doing is highly both injurious and impious.

3. It was alſo (which we ſhould conſider) even one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by Gods Providence, that as ſome mens induſtry and patience might be exerciſed by their poverty, ſo other men by their wealth ſhould have ability of practiſing juſtice and charity; that ſo both rich and poor might thence become capable of recompences, ſuitable to the worth of ſuch vertuous performances. *Why art thou rich,*

(ſaith

(ſaith St. *Baſil*) *and he poor? Surely for this; That thou mayſt attain the reward of benignity, and faithful diſpenſation; and that he may be honoured with the great prize of patience.* God in making thee rich, would have thee to be a double Benefactor, not only to thy poor Neighbour, but alſo to thy ſelf; whilſt thou beſtoweſt relief on him, purchaſing a reward to thy ſelf. God alſo by this order of things deſigns, that a charitable entercourſe ſhould be maintained among men, mutually pleaſant and beneficial; the rich kindly obliging the poor, and the poor gratefully ſerving the rich. Wherefore by neglecting theſe duties, we unadviſedly croſs the

Διά τι σὺ μὲν πλουτεῖς, ἐκεῖνος δὲ πένεται. οὐ πάντως, ἵνα σὺ χρηστότητος καὶ πιστῆς οἰκονομίας μισθὸν ὑποδέξῃ, κἀκεῖνος τοῖς μεγάλοις ἆθλοις τῆς ὑπομονῆς τιμηθῇ. Baſ. M.

the good purpose of God toward us, depriving our selves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We should also do well to consider, that a poor man, even as such, is not to be disregarded, and that poverty it self is no such contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine: there are Considerations, which may qualifie Poverty even to dispute the place with Wealth, and to claim precedence to it: If the world vulgarly doth account, and call the rich man happy, a better Author hath pronounced the poor man such: *Blessed are the poor*, doth march in the van of the Beatitudes, and a reason go-

Luk. 6 20.

eth

eth along therewith, which asserteth its right to the place; *for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; for that they are not only in an equal capacity as men, but in a nearer disposition as poor to the acquisition of that blissful state; for that poverty (the Mistriss of Sobriety and honest Industry, the Mother of Humility and Patience, the Nurse of all Vertue) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward Heaven: by it also we conform unto the Son of God himself, the Heir of Eternal Majesty, the Saviour of the World, *who for our sake became poor*, (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν, for our sake became a beggar) *that we* 2 Cor 8. 9.

through his poverty (or beggery) *might become rich*: he willingly choſe, he eſpecially dignified and ſanctified that depth of poverty, which we ſo proudly ſlight and loath. The greateſt Princes and Potentates in the World, the moſt wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor Beggar had been irrecoverably miſerable: to Poverty it is, that every one of us doth owe all the poſſibility there is, all the hopes we can have of our Salvation; and ſhall we then ingratefully requite it with ſcorn, or with pitileſs neglect? ſhall we preſume in the perſon of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but moſt holy and moſt happy

JESUS,

Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer? No; if we will do Poverty right, we must rather for his dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

5. Thus a due reflection on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succour; but let us also consider him as related unto our selves: Every such person is our near Kinsman, is our Brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in blood, and agreement in Nature knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one source, several twigs sprouting from one stock; *One blood*, derived through several channels;

Nemo est in genere humano, cui non dilectio, etsi non pro mutua charitate, pro ipsa tamen communis naturæ societate debetur. *Aug Epist.* 121.

Ac. 17. 26.

Οἰκεῖον πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον. Arist.

one ſubſtance, by miraculous efficacy of the Divine Benediction, multiplied or dilated unto ſeveral times and places. We are all faſhioned according to the ſame original Idea, reſembling God our common Father; we are all endewed with the ſame faculties, inclinations and affections; we all conſpire in the ſame eſſential ingredients of our conſtitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof; it is only ſome inconſiderable accidents, (ſuch as age, place, figure, ſtature, colour, garb) which diverſifie and diſtinguiſh us; in which, according to ſucceſſions of time and chance, we commonly no leſs differ from our ſelves, than we do at

Ἐν ἀνθρείοις πάθεσι θεραπευτέον τὸ συγγενὲς καὶ ὁμόφυλον. Greg. N z.

pre-

preſent from them: ſo that in effect, and reaſonable eſteem, every man is not only our Brother, but (as *Ariſtotle* ſaith of a Friend) ἄλλος αὐτὸς, *another ones ſelf*; is not only our moſt lively image, but in a manner our very ſubſtance; another our ſelf under a ſmall variation of preſent circumſtances: the moſt of diſtinction between us and our poor Neighbour, conſiſts in exteriour ſhew, in moveable attire, in caſual appendages to the nature of man; ſo that really when we uſe him well, we are kind to our ſelves, when we yield him courteous regard, we bear reſpect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do ſuſtain and

Nihil eſt unum uni tam ſimile, tam par, quàm omnes inter noſmetipſos ſumus. *Cic de Leg.* 1.

cherish a member of our own body: but when we are cruel or harsh to him, we abuse our selves; when we scorn him, we lay disparagement and disgrace on mankind it self; when we withhold succour or sustenance from him, we do (as the Prophet speaketh) *hide our selves from our own flesh*; we starve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of our stock: immoderate selfishness so blindeth us, that we oversee and forget our selves: it is in this, it is in other good senses true what the Wise-man saith, *The merciful man doth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel, troubleth his own flesh.*

Isai. 58. 7.

Prov. 11. 17.

6. Farther, as the poor man is

is so nearly allied to us by society of common nature, so is he more strictly joined to us by the bands of spiritual Consanguinity. All Christians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the same heavenly Father, spring from the same incorruptible seed, are regenerated to the same lively hope, are Co-heirs of the same heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body, (*members*, saith St. *Paul*, *one of another*) and animated by one holy Spirit; which relation, as it is the most noble, and the most close that can be, so it should breed the greatest endearments, and should express it self in correspondent effects; it should ren-

der us full of affection and sympathy one toward another; it should make us to tender the needs, and feel the sufferings of any Christian as our own; it should dispose us freely to communicate whatever we have, how pretious soever, to any of our brethren: this holy friendship should establish a charitable equality and community among us, both in point of honour and of estate: for since all things considerable are common unto us, since we are all purchased and purified by the same precious blood, since we all partake of the same precious faith, of the same high calling, of the same honourable priviledges, of the same glorious pro-

φίλον γὰρ οὐδὲν ἴδιον, ὅτινες φίλοι ὀρθῶς πεφύκασ', ἀλλὰ κοινὰ χρήματα. Eurip. Androm.

promiſes and hopes; ſince we all have the ſame Lord and Saviour; why ſhould theſe ſecular trifles be ſo private and particular among us? Why ſhould not ſo huge a parity in thoſe only valuable things not wholly (I ſay not in worldly ſtate, or outward appearance, ſuch as the preſervation of order in ſecular affairs requireth, but) in Coloſ. 3. 11. our opinion and affection extinguiſh that ſlight diſtinction of *rich* and *poor*, in concernments temporal? How can we ſlight ſo noble, ſo great a Perſonage as a Chriſtian, for wanting a little droſs? How can we deem our ſelves much his ſuperiour, upon ſo petty an Heb. 2. 11. Mat. 25. 40. Joh. 15. 14. advantage, for having that, which

which is not worth ſpeaking or thinking of, in compariſon to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himſelf is not aſhamed to call the leaſt among us his Brother, and his Friend; and ſhall we then diſdain to yield to ſuch an one the regard, and treatment ſuitable to ſuch a Quality? Shall we not honour any Brother of our Lord? ſhall we not be civil and kind to any Friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true reſpect or affection unto himſelf? It is his expreſs precept, that the greateſt among us ſhould, in imitation of his moſt humble and charitable Self, be ready to ſerve the meaneſt; and, that we ſhould *in honour prefer one another,*

Mat. 20. 26.

Rom. 12. 10. Phil. 2. 3.

ther, and *in lowlineſs of mind eſteem others better than our ſelves*, are Apoſtolical Rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by diſregarding the poor. Yea, this relation ſhould, according to St. *Johns* Doctrine, diſpoſe us not only freely to impart theſe temporal goods, but even, if occaſion be, willingly to expoſe our very lives for our brethren: *Hereby*, ſaith he, *we perceive the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.* How greatly then are they deficient from their duty, how little in truth are they Chriſtians, who are unwilling to part with the very

1 Joh. 3. 16.

very ſuperfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Chriſtian? Thus conſidering our Brother may breed in us charitable diſpoſitions toward him, and induce us to the practiſe of theſe duties.

IV. Head of Diſcourſe. Moreover, if we reflect upon our ſelves, and conſider either our nature, or our ſtate here, we cannot but obſerve many ſtrong engagements to the ſame practiſe.

1. The very conſtitution, frame and temper of our nature, directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence by obſerving thoſe duties, we obſerve our own nature, we improve it, we

we advance it to the beſt perfection it is capable of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debaſe the ſame—*hæc noſtri pars optima ſensûs*; The beſt of our natural inclinations (thoſe ſacred reliques of Gods image originally ſtamped on our minds) do ſenſibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very ſame bowels, which in our own want do by a lively ſenſe of pain inform us thereof, and inſtigate us to provide for its relief, do alſo grievouſly reſent the diſtreſſes of another, admoniſhing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him ſuccour. Such is the natural ſympathy between men, (diſcernable in all

Juven. Sat. 15.

——Mutuus ut nos Affectus petere auxilium, & præſtare juberat. *Juven.* 16.

all, but appearing moſt vigorous in the beſt natures) that we cannot ſee, cannot hear of, yea can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being ſomewhat diſturbed, and afflicted our ſelves. As alſo nature to the acts requiſite toward preſervation of our life, hath annexed a ſenſible pleaſure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: ſo hath ſhe made the communication of benefits to others, to be accompanied with a very delicious reliſh upon the mind of him that practiſes it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and ſavoury delight than beneficence. A man may be vertuouſly voluptuous, and a

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laudable Epicure by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of *Epicurus* himſelf, (the great Patron of Pleaſure) is no wiſe ſo pleaſant as to do it: God and Nature therefore within us do ſollicite the poor mans caſe; even our own eaſe and ſatisfaction demand from us compaſſion and kindneſs toward him; by exerciſing them, we hearken to Natures wiſe Diſciplines, and comply with her kindly Inſtincts; we cheriſh good humour, and ſweeten our complexion; ſo ennobling our minds, we become not only more like to God, but more perfectly men; by the contrary practiſe we rebel againſt the Laws,

Ἐπίκουρος τὸ εὖ πάσχειν τοῦ εὖ ποιεῖν οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἥδιον εἶναι φησί. *Plut. de Philoſ. conv. cum Princ.*

Laws, and pervert the due courſe of our Nature; we do weaken, corrupt and ſtifle that which is beſt in us; we harden and ſtupifie our ſouls; ſo monſtrouſly degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and becoming rather like ſavage beaſts, than ſociable men; yea, ſomewhat worſe perhaps than many beaſts; for commonly bruits will combine to the ſuccour of one another; they will defend and help thoſe of the ſame kind.

2. And if the ſenſitive part within us doth ſuggeſt ſo much, the rational dictates more unto us; that heavenly faculty, having capacities ſo wide, and ſo mighty energies, was ſurely not

created

created to ſerve mean or narrow deſigns; it was not given us to ſcrape eternally in earth, or to amaſs heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the ſervice of one puny creature, for the ſuſtenance or ſatisfaction of a ſingle carcaſe: 'tis much below an intelligent perſon to weary himſelf with ſervile toils, to diſtract his mind with ignoble cares for concernments ſo low and ſcanty; but to regard and purſue the common good of men; to diſpenſe adviſe and aid, where needs requires; to diffuſe its vertue all about in beneficial effects; theſe are Operations worthy of Reaſon, theſe are Imployments congruous to the native excellency

of that Divine Power implanted in us; such performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he sprang, and whither he tends.

3. Farther, examining our selves, we may also observe, that we are in reality, what our poor Neighbour appears to be, in many respects no less indigent and impotent than he: we no less, yea far more, for our subsistance depend upon the arbitrary bounty of another, than he seemeth to relie upon ours. We as delectible creatures do continually want support; we as grievous sinners do always need mercy; every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to discharge;

debts

debts of gratitude for benefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed; we therefore perpetually ſtand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the Gates of Heaven. We all, from Prince to Peaſant, live meerly upon alms, and are moſt really in condition Beggars: to *to pray always*, is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeneſs in ſtate ſhould therefore diſpoſe us to ſuccour our fellows, and δανείζειν θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέου χρήζοντι, *to lend mercy to God, who need mercy from him*, as the good Father ſpeaketh. We ſhould (as the Apoſtle adviſes and argues) *Remember them that are* Greg. Naz. Heb. 13. 3.

in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being our selves also in the body; as being companions in necessity, or subject to the like didistress. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet unmindful of our obligation to God, refuse them to others, shall we not deserve to hear that dreadful exprobration, *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?*

Mat. 18. 32, 33.

Ὅμως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπουμένοις Ταρβεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα, μὴ σφαλῇ ποτέ. Sophin. Trachin.

4. The great incertainty, and instability of our condition, doth also require our consideration We that now flourish in a fair and full estate, may soon

ſoon be in the caſe of that poor creature, who now ſues for our relief; we that to this day enjoy the wealth of *Job*, may the morrow need his patience; there are *Sabeans*, which may come and drive away our cattel; there are tempeſts, which may ariſe, and ſmite down our houſes; there is a fire of God, which may fall from Heaven, and conſume our ſubſtance; a meſſenger of all theſe miſchiefs may, for all we know, be preſently at our doors; it happened ſo to a better man than we, as unexpectedly and with as ſmall ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is ſurrounded with dangers, and expoſed to caſualties innu-

merable; Violence may ſnatch it from us, Treachery may cheat us of it; Miſchance may ſeize thereon, a ſecret Moth may devour it; the wiſdom of Providence for our trial, or its juſtice for our puniſhment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accomptable cauſes were apparent) might eaſily ſerve to waſt it from us; for, *Riches* (ſaith the Wiſe-man) *make themſelves wings*, (they it ſeems do need no help for that) *and fly away like as an Eagle toward Heaven*; that is, of their own accord they do ſwiftly convey themſelves away, out of our ſight, and beyond our reach: they are but wind, *What profit* (ſays the

Prov. 23. 5.

Eccleſ. 5. 11.

the Preacher) *hath he that laboureth for the wind?* for wind, that is, for a thing which can no wiſe be fixed or ſetled in one corner; which therefore 'tis a vanity to conceive, that we can ſurely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to ſtand firm upon a place ſo ſlippery? How can we build any confidence on a bottom ſo looſe and brittle? How can we ſuffer our minds to be ſwell'd up, like bubbles, with vain conceit, by the breath of ſuch things, more fleeting and vertiginous than any Air? againſt the precepts of the wiſeſt and beſt men: *If riches increaſe,* Pſ. 62. 10. ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *ſet not your heart* on them: *Wilt thou ſet* Prov. 23. 5.

thine eyes upon that which is not? ſaith the Wiſe man: (that is, wilt thou regard that which is ſo tranſitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can ſcarce look on, before it is gone?) and, *Charge them* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches:* (ἐπ' ἀδηλότητι πλούτου, in the obſcurity, or inevidence of riches; things which we can never plainly diſcern how long we ſhall keep them, how much we can enjoy them) what ſhould make us unwilling with certain advantage to our ſelves, freely to let that go, which preſently without our leave may forſake us? How can we reaſon-

ſonably judge our caſe much different from that of the pooreſt body, whenas in a trice we may perhaps change places and perſons; when the ſcene turning, he may be advanced unto our wealth, we may be depreſſed into his want? ſince every Age yieldeth inſtances of ſome *Cræſus*, ſome *Polycrates*, ſome *Pompey*, ſome *Job*, ſome *Nebuchodonoſor*, who within a ſmall compaſs of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the leſs wiſe the mark both of envy and ſcorn; ſeeing every day preſenteth unexpected viciſſitudes, the Sea of Humane Affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this,

now on the other ſhore its reſtleſs waves of profit and credit; ſince eſpecially there is a God, who arbitrarily diſpoſeth things, and with a turn of his hand changeth the ſtate of men; who, as the Scripture ſaith, *Maketh rich and poor, bringeth low and lifteth up; poureth contempt upon Princes; raiſeth the poor out of the duſt, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghil, to ſet them among Princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory*: ſeeing, I ſay, apparently ſuch is the condition of things here, that we may ſoon need his pity and help, who now requeſteth ours, why ſhould we not be very ready to afford them to him? why ſhould we not gladly em-

1 Sam. 2. 7. Job 12. 21. Pſal. 107. 41. 113. 7.

embrace our opportunity, and use our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter? *Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days; give a portion to seven, and also unto eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth*: that is, considering the inconstancy & uncertainty of affairs here, and what adversity may befal thee, be liberal upon all occasions, and thou shalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality upon thee: so the Wise-man advises, and so Wisdom certainly dictates that we should do; Eccles. 11. 1.

5. And equity doth exact no

no less: for were any of us in the needy mans plight, (as easily we may be reduced thereto) we should believe our case deserved commiseration; we should importunately demand relief, we should be grievously displeased at a repulse; we should apprehend our selves very hardly dealt with, and sadly we should complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if succour were refused to us. In all equity therefore we should be apt to minister the same to others; for nothing can be more unreasonable or unjust, than to require or expect that from another, which in a like case we are unwilling to render unto him; it is a plain deviation from

Benefic'um qui dare nescit, injustè petit. *Laver. Mim.*

from that Fundamental Rule, which is the Baſe of all Juſtice; and virtually the ſum (as our Saviour telleth us) of whatever is preſcribed us: *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.* Mat. 7. 12. I add, that upon theſe Conſiderations, by unmerciful dealing, we put our ſelves into a very bad and tickliſh condition; wholly depending upon the conſtancy of that which is moſt inconſtant; ſo that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reaſonably hope for, nor juſtly pretend to any relief or comfort from others.

6. We ſhould alſo remember concerning our ſelves, that we

we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our Poſſeſſions for ever in our hands; yea, could we foreſee ſome definite ſpace of time, conſiderably long, in which we might aſſuredly enjoy our ſtores, it might ſeem ſomewhat excuſable to ſcrape hard, and to hold faſt; to do ſo might look like rational Pro-

Prov. 27. 24. vidence: but ſince *Riches are not for ever, nor doth the Crown endure to all generations*, (as the Wiſe-man ſpeaketh) ſince they muſt infallibly be ſoon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time; 'tis very unaccomptable why we ſhould ſo greedily ſeek them, and hug

Jam. 1. 10, 11. them ſo fondly. *The rich man*, ſaith

saith St. *James*, *as the flower of the grass shall pass away*: it is his special doom *to fade away* suddenly; it is obvious why in many respects he is somewhat more than others obnoxious to the fatal stroke, and upon special accompts of justice he may be farther more exposed thereto; considering the case of the rich fool in the Gospel, we may Luk.12.20. easily discern them; we should reckon, that it may happen to us, as it did there to him; that after we have reared great Barns, and *stored up much goods for many years*, our *soul this very night* may be *required of us*; however, if it be uncertain when, it is most certain, that after a very short time our

thred

1 Tim. 6. 7. Eccles. 5. 15. Job. 1. 21. thred will be ſpun out; then ſhall we be rifled, and quite ſtript of all; becoming ſtark naked, as when we came into the world: we ſhall not carry with us one grain of our gliſtering Metals, or one rag of our gaudy Stuff; our ſtately Houſes, our fine Gardens, and our ſpatious Walks, muſt all be exchanged for a cloſe Hole under ground; we muſt for ever bid farewel to our Pomps and Magnificences, to our Feaſts and Jollities, to our Sports and Paſtimes; not one of all our numerous and ſplendid retinue; no Companion of our Pleaſure, no Admirer of our Fortune, no Flatterer of our Vices can wait upon us; deſo-

Isai. 14. 11.

late

late and unattended we muſt go down into the Chambers of Darkneſs; then ſhall we find, that to die rich (as men are wont improperly to ſpeak) is really to die moſt poor; that to have carefully kept our Money, is to have loſt it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worſe than nothing: To have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmerciful, will be no advantage or ſatisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cauſe of huge damage, and bitter regret unto us: All our Treaſures will not procure us any favour, or purchaſe one Advocate for us in that impartial World; yea, it ſhall be they

which will there prosecute us with clamorous accusations, will bear sore testimony against us, (*The rust of them*, saith St. *James*, *shall be a witness against us*, signifying our unjust or uncharitable detention of them) will obtain a most heavy sentence upon us; they will render our audit more difficult, and enflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our sins with imputations of unfaithfulness and ingratitude; so with their load they will press us deeper into perdition; to omit, that having so ill managed them, we shall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy upon our memories; for ordinarily

Jam. 5. 3.

Luk. 16. 25. 6. 24. 12. 21. Matth. 25. 30. Jam. 5. 5.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

rily of such a rich person it is true, that *Job* says of him, *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place*; like one, who departs from off this stage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not therefore infinitely better to prevent this being necessarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by seasonably disposing them so, as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honour; being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them; modest and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and sober in our enjoyments of them; contented upon any reasonable occasion to loose or leave them; Job 27. 19, 23.

and especially most ready to dispense them in that best way, which God hath prescribed, according to the exigencies of Humanity and Charity? By thus ordering our Riches, we shall render them benefits and
Luk. 16 9. blessings to us; we shall by them procure sure friendship and favour, great worship and respect in the other world; having so lived (in the exercise of bounty and mercy) we shall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby sent them before us; having, like wise Merchants, transmitted and drawn them by a most safe conveyance into our Country and Home; where infallibly

we

we ſhall find them, and with everlaſting content enjoy them. So conſidering our ſelves, and and our ſtate will diſpoſe us to the practiſe of theſe duties.

Furthermore, if we contemplate our Wealth it ſelf, we may therein deſcry great motives to bounty. V. Head of Diſcourſe.

1. Thus to employ our Riches, is really the beſt uſe they are capable of; not only the moſt innocent, moſt worthy, moſt plauſible; but the moſt ſafe, moſt pleaſant, moſt advantagious, and conſequently in all reſpects moſt prudent way of diſpoſing them. To keep them cloſe without uſing or enjoying them at all, is a moſt

ſottiſh extravagance, or a ſtrange kind of madneſs; a man thence affecting to be rich, quite impoveriſheth himſelf, diſpoſſeſſeth himſelf of all, & alienateth from himſelf his Eſtate: his Gold is no more his, than when it was in the *Indies*, or lay hid in the Mines; his Corn is no more his, than if it ſtood growing in *Arabia* or *China*; he is no more owner of his Lands, than he is Maſter of *Jeruſalem*, or *Grand-Cairo*; for what difference is there, whether diſtance of place or baſeneſs of mind ſever things from him? whether his own heart, or another mans hand detain them from his uſe? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpoſe?

Σκορπιζόμενος ὁ πλοῦτος πέφυκε παραμένειν, συνεχόμενος ἀλλοτριοῦται. Baſil. M. Tam deeſt avaro quod habet, quàm quod non habet.

whe-

whether one is a beggar out of neceſſity, or by choice? is preſſed to want, or a Volunteer thereto? Such an one may fancy himſelf rich, and others, wiſe as himſelf, may repute him ſo; but ſo diſtracted perſons to themſelves and to one another do ſeem great Princes, and ſtile themſelves ſuch; with as much reaſon almoſt he might pretend to be wiſe, or to be good. Riches are χρήματα, things whoſe nature conſiſts in uſefulneſs; abſtract that, they become nothing, things of no conſideration or value; he that hath them, is no more concerned in them, than he that hath them not: it is the heart and skill to uſe affluence of things wiſe-

ly and nobly, which makes it Wealth, and constitutes him rich that hath it; otherwise the Chests may be cramm'd, and the Barns stuffed full, while the man is miserably poor and beggarly; 'tis in this sense true, which the Wise-man says, *There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.* But the very having Riches (will such a man say) is matter of Reputation; men do esteem and honour him that hath them; true, if he knows how, and hath the mind to use them well, otherwise all the credit they yield consists in making their Master ridiculous to wise men, and infamous among all men: but, putting case that any should be so fool-

Deſunt inopi multa, avaro omnia. *Sen. Ep* 1c8.

Prov. 13. 7.

ish

iſh as to reſpect us meerly for ſeeming rich, why ſhould we accommodate our practiſe to their vain opinion, or be baſe our ſelves becauſe others are not wiſe? But however, (may he ſay again) it is a pleaſant thing to ſee them; a heap of Gold is the moſt lovely ſpectacle that one can behold; it does a mans heart good to view an abundance of good things about him; for this plea indeed he hath a good Author; this it ſhould ſeem was all the benefit the Wiſe-man obſerved in them, accruing to ſuch perſons: *What good*, ſaith he, *is there to the owners thereof, ſaving the beholding of them with their eyes?* But if this be all Eccleſ. 5 11.

they

they are good for, it is, one would think, a very slim benefit they afford, little able to balance the pain and care requisite to the acquist and custody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the possessour, for any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleasure may enjoy better sights; all the Riches and Ornaments of Nature, the glorious splendours of Heaven, and the sweet beauties of the Field, are exposed to common view; the choicest Magnificencies and Gallantries of the World, do studiously present themselves to every mans eye; these in part every man truly may appropriate to himself; and by imagination

nation any man can as well take all that he ſees for his own, as the tenacious Miſer doth fancy his dear pelf to be his.

But mine Heir (perhaps he will farther ſay) will thank me, will praiſe me, will bleſs me for my great care and providence: If he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee; thou ſhalt not hear what he ſays, or feel any good from what he does: And moſt probably thou art miſtaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou *knoweſt not who* he ſhall be, *that ſhall gather all thou heapeſt up*, or *ſhall rule over all thy labour*, (*whither he ſhall be a wiſe man or a fool*, a kinſman or a ſtranger, Pſal. 39. 6. Eccleſ. 2. 19.

a

a friend or a foe) ſo thou canſt as little gueſs what he will think or ſay: If he hath wit, he may ſweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wiſdom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy diſgrace ſpend what thou leaveſt, as vainly, as thou didſt get or keep it. But (this to be ſure he will in the end ſay for himſelf) Money is a good reſerve againſt neceſſary occaſions, or bad times, that may come; againſt the time of old age, of ſickneſs, of adverſity; 'tis the ſureſt friend a man can have in ſuch caſes, which, when all fails, will be ready to help him: *The rich mans Wealth is his ſtrong City*, the Wiſe-man

Prov. 10. 15.

he

he thinks never ſpake more wiſely; he therefore will not diſmantle this fortreſs, but will keep it well ſtored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and uſeleſs by him: but (to let paſs now the prophane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and ſubſtituting our Providence in the room of his) what a folly is it, thus to anticipate evil, and to create to our ſelves a preſent adverſity from a ſuſpicion of one future; to pinch our ſelves now, leſt we ſhould ſuffer hereafter; to pine to day, becauſe we can imagine it poſſible that we may ſtarve to morrow; to forego certain occaſions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the

the like occaſions may happen one day, we know not when; not to uſe things now, when reaſon bids us, becauſe they may be uſeful at another time? Not conſidering alſo, that many intervenient accidents, more probably than a moderate and handſom uſe of our Wealth, may crop the excreſcencies thereof.

2. But ſetting aſide theſe abſurd excuſes of penuriouſneſs, we may conſider, that ſecluding the good uſe of them in beneficence, Riches are very impertinent, very cumberſom, very dangerous, very miſchievous things; either ſuperfluous toys, or troubleſome clogs, or treacherous ſnares, or rather all theſe

theſe in combination, productive of trouble, ſorrow, and ſin. A ſmall pittance will, and muſt ſuffice to all reaſonable purpoſes, to ſatisfie our neceſſities, to procure conveniencies, to yield innocent delight and eaſe: our nature doth not require, nor cannot bear much: (*Take heed and beware of covetouſneſs*, ſaith our Lord, *for a mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth*: that is, a man may live well without it) all the reſt, ſetting beneficence apart, can only ſerve vanity or vice, will make us really fools or ſlaves. (*They that will be rich*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *fall into temptation, and a ſnare, and into many*

Luk. 12. 15.

1 Tim 6 8.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men into destruction and perdition.) They puff up our minds with vain and false conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or frenzy, to take our selves for other persons, more great, more wise, more good, more happy than we are: for constantly, as the Wise-man observed, *The rich man is wise in his own conceit*; and *Agur* thus intimates in his prayer, *Remove far from me vanity and lyes, give me neither poverty nor riches.* They render us insensible and forgetful of God, of our selves, of piety and vertue, of all that is good and worthy of us: (*Lest I be full,* said that good man again, assign-

Prov. 28. 11.

Prov. 30. 8.

Prov 30. 9.

ing

ing a reaſon why he deprecated being rich, *and deny thee, and ſay, Who is the Lord?*) they ſwallow up our thoughts, our affections, our endeavours, our time and leiſure; poſſeſſing our hearts with a doting love unto them, (excluding other good affections) diſtracting our minds with anxious cares about them, (choaking other good thoughts) encumbring all our life with buſineſs about them, (inconſiſtent with due attention to our other more weighty and neceſſary concernments) filling our heads with ſuſpicions, and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and ſorrows; they immerſe our ſouls in all the follies of pride,

Mat. 6. 24.
Mat. 13. 22.
Luk. 10. 41.
2 Tim. 2. 4.
1 Tim. 6. 10.

Jam. 5. 5. Luk. 16. 19 in all the filths of luxury, in all the miſchiefs emergent from ſloth and ſtupidity; they are 1 Tim. 6. 10. *the root of all evils* unto us, and the greateſt obſtructions of our Mat. 19. 23, 24. true happineſs, rendring Salvation almoſt impoſſible, and Heaven in a manner inacceſſible to us: ſo that to be rich, (if ſevered from a ſober mind, and a free heart) is a great diſeaſe, and the ſource of many grievous diſtempers both of body and mind; from which we cannot otherwiſe, well otherwiſe, ſecure or reſcue our ſelves, than by liberally ſpending them in works of bounty and mercy: ſo ſhall we eaſe our ſelves of the burthens, ſo ſhall we elude the temptations,

ſo

ſo ſhall we abandon the vices, and ſo ſhall we eſcape all the ſad miſchiefs incident to them: Thus to uſe wealth, ſhall turn it into a convenience, and an ornament of our lives, into a conſiderable bleſſing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this uſe of wealth, or abſtracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitiful and deſpicable than it; it is but like the load, or the trappings of an Aſs; a wiſe man on that condition would not chuſe it, or endure to be peſtered with it; but would ſerve it, as thoſe Philoſophers did, who flung it away, that it might not diſturb their contemplations: 'tis the power it

affords of benefiting men, which only can ſeaſon, and ingratiate it to the reliſh of ſuch a perſon; otherwiſe it is evidently true, which the Wiſe-man affirms, *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treaſure, and trouble therewith.*

Prov. 15. 16.

3. Again, we may conſider, that to diſpenſe our Wealth liberally, is the beſt way to preſerve it, and to continue Maſters thereof; what we give, is not thrown away, but ſaved from danger; while we detain it at home, (as it ſeems to us) it really is abroad, and at adventures; it is out at Sea, ſailing perilouſly in ſtorms, near rocks and ſhelves, among Pirates; nor can it ever be ſafe, till it is brought

brought into this port, or enſured this way; when we have beſtowed it on the poor, then have we lodged it in unqueſtionable ſafety; in a place where no rapine, no deceit, no miſhap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it. All our Doors and Bars, all our Forces and Guards, all the circumſpection and vigilancy we can uſe, are no defence or ſecurity at all in compariſon to this diſpoſal thereof: The poor man's ſtomach is a Granary for our Corn, which never can be exhauſted; the poor man's back is a Wardrobe for our Clothes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's Pocket is a Bank for our Money, which

never can disappoint or deceive us; all the rich Traders in the World may decay and break, but the Poor can never fail, except God himself turn Bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and entrust in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in Heaven, whither no thief can climb, where no moth or rust do abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich; for God's Providence is his Estate; God's Wisdom and Power are his Defence; God's Love and Favour are his Reward; God's Word is his Assurance;

who

who hath ſaid it, that *He which giveth to the poor, ſhall not lack*: no viciſſitude therefore of things can ſurprize him, or find him unfurniſhed; no diſaſter can impoveriſh him, no adverſity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reſerve againſt all times and occaſions: He that *deviſeth liberal things, by liberal things ſhall he ſtand*, (ſaith the Prophet.) But on the other hand, being niggardly is the likelieſt courſe we can take to loſe our Wealth and Eſtate; we thereby expoſe them to danger, and leave them defenceleſs; we ſubject them to the envious eye, to the ſlanderous tongue, to the ravenous and inſidious hand; we deprive them of Divine pro-

Prov. 28. 27.

Iſa. 32. 8.

tection, which if it be away, Pſal. 127. 1. *The watch-man waketh but in vain*: We provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the Talent from that unprofitable ſervant, who did not uſe it well. We do indeed thereby yield God juſt cauſe of war, and enmity againſt us; which being, *Omnia dat qui juſta negat*; we do forfeit all to Divine Juſtice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet poſſeſſion of any thing, if we refuſe to pay our due Tributes and Taxes impoſed upon us by our Almighty Sovereign; if we live in ſuch rebellion againſt his Authority, ſuch violation of his

right,

right, ſuch diffidence to his Word? No: *He that truſteth in his riches, ſhall fall, but the righteous ſhall flouriſh as a branch*: ſuch is the difference between the covetous and the liberal in point of ſecurity and ſucceſs concerning their Eſtate. Prov. 11. 28.

Even according to the humane and ordinary way of eſteeming things, (abſtracting from the ſpecial Providence of God) the liberal perſon hath in conſequence of his bounty, more real ſecurity for his Wealth, than this world hath any other: He thereby gets an intereſt in the gratitude and affection of thoſe, whom he obligeth, together with the good will and reſpect of all men, who

who are ſpectators of his vertuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repoſitories to him of a treaſure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any miſchance ſhould arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiſerate him, every man would haſten to his ſuccour. As when a haughty, a greedy, or a gripple man do fall into calamity or diſgrace, ſcarce any one regardeth or pitieth him; Fortune deſerting ſuch a perſon, carries all with it, few or none ſtick to him, his moſt zealous flatterers are commonly the firſt that forſake him, contempt and neglect are

the

the only adherents to his condition; that of the Wise-man appears verified, *He that hideth his eyes from the poor, shall have many a curse*: so the courteous and bountiful person, when Fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good will and esteem of men; all men, upon accompts of honour and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favour him; even those, who before were strangers, become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him: it, in the common judgement of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer. Prov. 28. 27.

4 Nay

4. Nay farther we may consider, that exercising bounty is the most advantagious method of improving and increasing an Estate; but that being tenacious and illiberal, doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great encrease, is to sow much: he that sows little, how can he expect a good Crop? It is as true in spiritual Husbandry, as in the other, that *what a man soweth, that he shall reap*, both in kind, and according to proportion; so that great Husband-man St. *Paul* assureth us, *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully*: and *Salomon* means the

Gal. 6. 7, 8.

2 Cor. 9. 6, 10.

the ſame, when he ſaith, *To him that ſoweth righteouſneſs, ſhall be a ſure reward.* The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly; he that will not adventure any thing conſiderable, how can he think of a large return? 'Tis ſo likewiſe in the Evangelical Negotiations; if we put out much upon ſcore of Conſcience or Charity, we ſhall be ſure to profit much. Liberality is the moſt beneficial Traffick that can be; it is bringing our Wares to the beſt Market; it is letting out our Money into the beſt hands; we thereby lend our Money to God, who repays with vaſt Uſury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at preſent, and

Prov. 11. 18.

above

above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; so that if you will be Merchants this way, you shall be sure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich most easily and speedily:

Prov. 11. 24. *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered himself*: This is that which S. *Paul* again argues upon, when commending the *Philippians* free kindness toward him, he

Phil. 4. 17. says, *Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your accompt.* Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies and abundantly turns to good accompt; it indeed procuring Gods benediction, the fountain of all desirable plenty and prosperity, for, *The blessing*

of

of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no ſorrow with it. Prov. 10. 22. It is therefore the greateſt want of policy, the worſt ill-husbandry and unthriftineſs that can be, to be ſparing this way; he that uſes it, cannot be thriving; he muſt ſpend upon the main ſtock, and may be ſure to get nothing conſiderable. God ordinarily ſo proceeds, as to recompence, and retaliate men in the ſame kind, wherein they endeavour to pleaſe him, or preſume to offend him; ſo that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto will proſper their dealings, and bleſs their eſtates: (*For this very thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works,* Deut. 15. 10.

and

and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto, ſays *Moſes*) but they who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himſelf in their ſucceſs otherwiſe than to croſs it, or (which is worſe) to curſe it: for if he ſeem to favour them for a time with ſome proſperity in their affairs, their condition is much worſe thereby, their accompt will be more grievous, and their fate more diſaſtrous in the end.

Pſal. 73. 17.

5. Farther, the contributing part of our goods to the poor, will qualifie us to enjoy the reſt with ſatisfaction and comfort: The Oblation of theſe Firſt-fruits, as it will ſanctifie the whole lump of our Eſtate, ſo it will ſweeten it; having offered

this

this well-pleasing sacrifice of piety, having discharged this debt of justice, having paid this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at rest, and our conscience well satisfied, we shall, like those good people in the Acts, *eat our meat with gladness, and singleness of heart*; to see the poor man by our means accommodated, eased, and refreshed, will give a delicious relish to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our Estate, so it will render the fruition thereof sowre or unsavoury to us: for, can we with any content taste our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor

Ac. 2. 46.

man ſtands in ſight pining with hunger? Can we without regret ſee our Walls cloathed with Tapeſtry, our Horſes deckt with Golden Trappings, our Attendants ſtrutting in wanton Gaiety, while our honeſt poor Brother appears half naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furniſh ten poor people with neceſſaries, and have the heart within us, without ſhame and diſpleaſure, to ſee them want? No; the ſenſe of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthineſs toward our Neighbour, will not fail (if ever we conſiderately reflect on our behaviour)

to

to ſting us with cruel remorſe and ſelf-condemnation; the clamours of want and miſery ſurrounding us, will pierce our ears, and wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to baniſh them from our proſpect or regard, will ſo aſſail, and ſo purſue us, as to diſturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quaſh the briskneſs of our mirth, to allay the ſweetneſs of our pleaſure; yea rather, if ſtupidity and obduration have not ſeized on us, to imbitter all unto us; we ſhall feel that true, which *Zophar* ſpeaks of the cruel and covetous Oppeſſour, *Surely he ſhall not feel quietneſs in his belly —— he ſhall not rejoice* Job 20. 18, 20, 22.

in his ſubſtance— in the fulneſs of his ſufficiency he ſhall be in ſtraits.

6. I ſhall touch but one conſideration more, perſwaſive of this practiſe; it is this: The peculiar nature of our Religion ſpecially requires it, and the honour thereof exacts it from us; nothing better ſuits Chriſtianity, nothing more graces it, than liberality; nothing is more inconſiſtent therewith, or more diſparageth it, than being miſerable and ſordid. A Chriſtian Niggard is the verieſt nonſenſe that can be; for, What is is a Chriſtian? What, but a man, who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who repoſes all his truſt

and

and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the moſt good and bountiful God, to follow, as the beſt pattern of his practiſe, the moſt benign and charitable JESUS, the Son of God; to obey the Laws of God, and his Chriſt, the ſum and ſubſtance of which is Charity; half whoſe Religion doth conſiſt in loving his Neighbor as himſelf? What is he farther, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleaſures of it; who profeſſes himſelf in diſpoſition and affection of mind to forſake all things for Chriſts ſake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under Heaven; having all his

main concernments and treaſures, his heart, his hopes, and his happineſs in another world? Such is a Chriſtian; and what is a Niggard? All things quite contrary: One whoſe practiſe manifeſtly ſhews him to worſhip another thing beſide, and before God; to love Mammon above God, and more to confide in it, than in him; One, who bears ſmall good will, kindneſs or pity toward his Brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celeſtial; whoſe mind and heart are riveted to this world; whoſe hopes and happineſſes are ſetled here below; whoſe ſoul is deeply immerſed and buried in earth: One who, according

cording to constant habit, notoriously breaketh the two great heads of Christian duty, *Loving God with all his heart, and his Neighbour as himself*: It is therefore, by comparing those things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile gross contradictions and inconsistencies, if we profess our selves to be Christians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the special grace and glory of our Religion, that it consisteth not in barren speculations, or empty formalities, or forward professions; not in fancying curiously, or speaking zealously, or looking demurely; but in really producing sensible fruits of goodness; in doing (as St. *Paul* signifies) *things* Tit. 3. 8.

good and profitable unto men, ſuch as thoſe chiefly are, of which we ſpeak. The moſt gracious wiſdom of God hath ſo modelled our Religion, that according to it Piety and Charity are the ſame thing; that we can never expreſs our ſelves more dutiful toward him, or better pleaſe him, or more truly glorifie him, than when we are kind and good to our poor Brother. We groſly miſtake, if we take giving of Alms to be a Jewiſh or Popiſh practiſe, ſuitable to Children and Dullards in Religion, beneath ſo refined, ſo improved, ſo loftily ſpiritual Gallants as we: No, 'tis a duty moſt properly, and moſt highly Chriſtian, as none more,

a moſt goodly fruit of grace, and a moſt faithful mark thereof: *By the experiment of this miniſtration, we* (as St. *Paul* ſaith) *glorifie God for our profeſſed ſubjection unto the Goſpel of Chriſt, and for our liberal diſtribution unto our brethren, and unto all men*: without it our faith is dead and ſenſeleſs; our high attainments are fond preſumptions; our fine notions and delicate ſpiritualities are in truth but ſilly dreams, the iſſues of a proud and ignorant fancy: he that appears hard-hearted and cloſe-fiſted toward his needy Brother, let him think or call himſelf what he pleaſeth, he plainly is no Chriſtian, but a blemiſh, a reproach, and a ſcan- 2 Cor. 9. 13.

ſcandal to that honourable Name.

7. To all theſe Conſiderations and Reaſons inducing to the practiſe of this kind of Charity, I might ſubjoin examples, and ſet before you the faireſt Copies that can be imagined thereof. We have for it the pattern of God himſelf, who is infinitely munificent and merciful; *from whom every good and perfect gift deſcendeth; who giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all*; who *giveth liberally and upbraideth not.* We have the example of the Son of God, who out of pure charity did freely part with the riches and glories of Eternity, voluntarily embracing extream poverty and want

Jam. 1. 5, 17. Act. 17. 25.

2 Cor. 8. 9.

want for our ſake, that we who were poor, might be enriched; we that were miſerable, might become happy; who *went about doing good*; ſpent all his life in painful diſpenſation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the bleſſed Patriarchs to follow, who at Gods pleaſure and call did readily leave their Country, their Friends, their Goods, and all they had. We have the practiſe of the holy Apoſtles, who freely *let go all to follow their Lord*; who chearfully ſuſtained all ſorts of loſſes, diſgraces, and pains for promoting the honour of God, and procuring good unto men; we have to move and encourage us hereto

Act. 10. 38.

Mat. 19. 27.

hereto the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who *so many as were possessours of lands and houses, did sell them*, and did impart the price of them to the community, *so that there was none poor among them*, and that *distribution was made to every one as he had need*. We have all the saints and eminent servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderful in the performance of these duties, (I could tell you of the blessed Martyr St. *Cyprian*, who was liberal by wholesale, bestowing all at once, a fair Estate, on God and the poor; of the renowned Bishop St. *Basil*, who constantly waited on the sick, and

Act. 4. 34, 35.

Pontius in vit. Cypr.

Greg. Naz. Orat. 40.

and kiſſed their ſores; of the moſt pious Confeſſour St. *Martin*, who having but one Coat left, and ſeeing a poor man that wanted cloaths, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that *poor man*; and many like inſtances out of authentick Hiſtory might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation: I might alſo, to beget emulation and ſhame in us, repreſent exemplary practiſes of Humanity and Charity even in Jews, Mahometans and Pagans, ſuch as in theſe cold days might paſs for more than ordinary among us) but I ſhall only propound one preſent and ſenſible example, that of this Noble City, whoſe publick bounty and charity in all

Sulp. Severus.

all kinds, (in education of Orphans, in curing the Diſeaſed, both in body and mind, in proviſion for the poor, in relieving all ſorts of neceſſities and miſeries) let me earneſtly intreat, and exhort us all for Gods ſake, as we are able, by our private charity to imitate, to encourage, and to aſſiſt; let us do this ſo much the more willingly and freely, as the ſad circumſtances of things, by Gods judgments brought upon us, do plainly require, that the Publick Charity it ſelf (lying under ſo great impediments, diſcouragements and diſtreſſes) ſhould be ſupported, ſupplied, and relieved by particular liberality. No words that I can deviſe will be

be so apt to affect and move you, as the case it self, if you please to consider it: hear it therefore speaking, and, I pray, with a pious and charitable disposition of mind attend thereto:

A true Report, &c.

For this excellent Pattern of pious bounty and mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God; let us humbly implore Gods blessing on the future management of it; let us pay due respect to the worthy Promoters thereof, and pray for rewards upon them answerable to their charitable care and industry employed therein; let us also accor-

according to our ability perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practiſe, give me leave briefly to reflect upon the latter part of my Text; which repreſents ſome inſtances of the felicity proper to a bountiful perſon, or ſome rewards peculiar to the exerciſing the duties of bounty and mercy.

The firſt is, *His righteouſneſs endureth for ever.* Theſe words are capable of various ſenſes, or of divers reſpects; they may import that the fame and remembrance of his bounty is very durable, or that the effects thereof do laſtingly continue, or that eternal rewards are deſigned thereto; they may reſpect

ſpect the bountiful man himſelf, or his poſterity here; they may ſimply relate to an endurance in Gods regard and care; or they may with that alſo comprehend a continuance in the good memory, and honourable mention of men. Now in truth according to all theſe interpretations, the bountiful mans righteouſneſs doth endure for ever, that is, very laſtingly (or ſo long as the ſpecial nature of the caſe doth bear) in any ſenſe; or for an abſolute perpetuity, in ſome ſenſe: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without ſtraining involve ſo many truths, none which therefore we think fit to

exclude, but ſhall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame, (which that it in part is intended here, that which precedes, *The righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance*, doth argue) it is evident, that it peculiarly attends upon this practiſe: the bountiful perſon is eſpecially that *juſt* man, whoſe *memory is bleſſed*, (is μετ' ἐπαίνων, as the Greek renders it; that is, is proſecuted with commendations and praiſes.) No Spices can ſo embalm a man, no Monument can ſo preſerve his Name and Memory, as works of beneficence; no other fame is comparably ſo precious, or truly

Prov. 10. 7.

truly glorious, as that which grows from thence: The Renown of Power and Proweſs, of Wit or Learning, of any Wiſdom or Skill, may dwell in the fancies of men with ſome admiration; but the remembrance of Bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial eſteem and affection; there erecting immoveable Trophies over Death and Oblivion, and it thence ſpreading it ſelf through the tongues of men with ſincere and ſprightly Commendations. The bountiful mans very Duſt is fragrant, and his Grave venerable; his Name is never mentioned without reſpect; his Actions have always theſe beſt

Ecchoes, with innumerable iterations reſounding after them: This was a true Friend to Mankind; This was a real Benefactour to the World; This was a Man good in earneſt, and pious to good purpoſe.

2. The effects of his righteouſneſs are likewiſe very durable: When he is departed hence, and in perſon is no more ſeen, he remains viſible and ſenſible in the footſteps and fruits of his goodneſs; the Poor ſtill beholds him preſent in the ſubſiſtence of himſelf, and his Family; the Sick-man feels him in the refreſhment, which he yet enjoys by his proviſion; he ſupervives in the

the heart of the Afflicted, which ſtill reſents the comfort, and rejoices in the eaſe which he procured him; all the World percieves benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his example; Religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himſelf enjoyeth glory and praiſe from his righteouſneſs.

3. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth in reſpect to his poſterity. It is an uſual plea for tenacity and parſimony, that care muſt be had of poſterity, that enough muſt be provided and laid up for the Family: But in truth this is a very abſurd excuſe, and doing according thereto, is a very prepo-

ſterous method of proceeding toward that end; it is really the greateſt improvidence in that reſpect, and the trueſt neglect that can be of our Children: for ſo doing, together with a ſeeming Eſtate, we entail a real Curſe upon them; we deveſt them of Gods protection and benediction, (the only ſure preſervatives of an Eſtate) we leave them Heirs of nothing ſo much as of puniſhments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injuſtice both toward God and man: whereas by liberally beſtowing on the poor, we demiſe unto them Gods bleſſing, which is the beſt inheritance; we recommend them

them to Gods especial care, which is the best tuition; we leave them Gods protection and providence, which are a Wealth indefectible and inexhaustible; we constitute God their Guardian, who will most faithfully manage, and most wisely improve their substance, both that which we leave to them, and that whith we gave for them to the poor; we thereby in good part entitle them unto the rewards appropriate to our pious Charity, our Faith, our Gratitude, our Self-denial, our Justice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of bounty; to omit the honour and the good will of men, which

constantly adhere to the bountiful mans Houſe and Family. It is therefore expreſly mentioned in Scripture as a recompence peculiar to this vertue, that ſecurity from want, and all happineſs do attend the poſterity of the bountiful perſon: *He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his ſeed is bleſſed*, ſaith *David* of him generally; and *David* alſo particularly obſerved, that in all the courſe of his long life, he could find no exception to the Rule: *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread.*

Pſal. 37. 25, 26.

Pſal. 112. 2, 3.

4. His righteouſneſs alſo endureth for ever in the perpetual favour

favour of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer upon him, who out of Conſcience and reverence toward God, out of good will and kindneſs toward his Brother hath diſperſed, and given to the poor. *God will not* (as the Apoſtle ſaith) *be unjuſt to forget his labour of charity in miniſtring* to his poor Brother: from the ſeed, which he *hath ſown to the Spirit*, he ſhall aſſuredly reap a moſt plentiful Crop of bleſſings ſpiritual; he ſhall effectually enjoy *the good foundation* that he hath *ſtored up*: for the goods he hath ſold and delivered, he ſhall *bonâ fide* receive his Bargain, *the hidden treaſure*, and *precious pearl* of eternal

Heb. 6. 10.

Gal. 6. 8.

1 Tim. 6. 19.

Mat. 13. 46.

eternal life; for this best improvement of his Talent of worldly Riches, he shall hear the *Euge bone serve, Well done good and faithful servant, enter into thy Masters joy*: he shall at last find God infinitely more bountiful to him, than he hath been unto the poor.

Mat. 25. 21, 26.

Thus when all the flashes of sensual pleasure are quite extinct; when all the flowers of secular glory are withered away; when all earthly glories are buried in darkness; when this world, and all the fashion of it, are utterly vanished and gone, the bountiful mans state will be still firm and flourishing, and *His righteousness shall endure for ever.*

It

It follows, *His horn ſhall be exalted with honour*: A Horn is an Emblem of Power; for in it the Beaſts ſtrength, offenſive and defenſive, doth conſiſt; and of Plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of Sanctity, for that in it was put the holy Oyl, with which Kings were Conſecrated; and of Dignity, both in conſequence upon the Reaſons mentioned, (as denoting might, and affluence, and ſacredneſs accompanying Soveraign Dignity) and becauſe alſo it is an eſpecial beauty and ornament to the Creature which hath it; ſo that this expreſſion (*His Horn ſhall be exalted*

1 Sam. 16.13.
1 King 1.39.

exalted with honour) may be ſuppoſed to import, that an abundance of high, and holy, of firm and ſolid honour ſhall attend upon the bountiful perſon. And that ſo it truly ſhall, may from many Conſiderations appear.

1. Honour is inſeparably annexed thereto as its natural Companion and ſhadow. God hath impreſſed upon all Vertue a Majeſty and a Beauty, which do command reſpect, and with a kindly violence extort Veneration from men; ſuch is the natural Conſtitution of our Souls, that as our ſenſe neceſſarily liketh what is fair and ſweet, ſo our mind unavoidably will eſteem what

is

is vertuous and worthy; all good Actions as ſuch are honourable, but of all Vertues Beneficence doth with moſt unqueſtionable right claim honour, and with irreſiſtible force procures it; as it is indeed the moſt divine of Vertues, ſo men are moſt apt to venerate them, whom they obſerve eminently to practiſe it. Other Vertues men ſee, and approve as goodly to the ſight, but this they taſte and feel; this by moſt ſenſible experience they find to be pleaſant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it. They, who *do their alms before men*, although out of unworthy vain-glorious deſign,

Φιλοῦνται σχεδὸν μάλιστα οἱ ἐλευθέριοι τῶν ἐπ' ἀρετῆς· ὠφέλιμοι γὰρ. A iſt.

Mat. 6. 1.

ſign, *have* yet, as our Savi- our intimates, *their reward*; they fail not to get Honour thereby; and even ſo have no bad penny-worth; for, in the Prov. 21. 21. Wiſe-mans judgment, *A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches*, they receive at leaſt fine air for groſs earth; and things very ſpiritual, for things moſt material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally deſire and prize, for that which only faſhion in ſome places endeareth, and commandeth: they get the end for the means, for ſcarce any man ſeeketh wealth for it ſelf, but either for Honour, or for Vertues ſake, that he may live creditably, or may do

good

good therewith: Neceſſity is ſerved with a little, Pleaſure may be ſatisfied with a competence, Abundance is required only to ſupport Honour, or promote good; and Honour by a natural connexion adhereth to Bounty.

Ἀι γὰρ δυναστεῖαι καὶ ὁ πλοῦτος διὰ τὴν τιμὴν ἐστιν αἱρετά. Ariſt.

2. But farther, an acceſſion of Honour according to gracious promiſe, (grounded upon ſomewhat of ſpecial reaſon, of equity, and decency in the thing it ſelf) is due from God unto the bountiful perſon, and is by ſpecial Providence ſurely conferred on him. There is no kind of piety, or inſtance of obedience, whereby God himſelf is more ſignally honoured, than by this.

These

These are chiefly those *good works*, the which *men seeing*, are apt to *glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*; to these fruits that is most applicable, which our Lord saith, *Hereby is my Father glorified, if you bear much fruit*: for, as, *He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker*; so *he honoureth him, that hath mercy on the poor.* The comfortable experience of good in this sort of actions, will most readily dispose men to admire and commend the excellency, the wisdom, the goodness of the Divine Laws, will therefore procure God hearty praise, and thanks for them: For, as St. *Paul* teacheth us, *The administration of*

Mat. 5. 16.

Joh. 15. 8.

Prov. 14. 31.

2 Cor. 9 11, 12, 13.

this

this ſervice not only ſupplyeth the want of the Saints, but is abundant alſo by many thankſgivings unto God; whilſt by experiment of this miniſtration, they glorifie God for your profeſſed ſubjection unto the Goſpel of Chriſt, and for your liberal diſtribution unto them, and unto all men. Since then God is ſo peculiarly honoured by this practiſe, it is but equal and fit, that God ſhould remunerate it with honour; Gods noble goodneſs will not let him ſeem defective in any ſort of beneficial correſpondence toward us, we ſhall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which

he will not be more apt to render us in Grace; they
Prov. 3. 9. who (as *Salomon* ſpeaketh) *honour God with their ſubſtance*, ſhall by God certainly be honoured with his bleſſing: Reaſon intimates ſo much, and we beſide have Gods expreſs Word for it;
1 Sam. 2. 30. *Them* (ſaith he) *who honour me, I will honour.* He that abſolutely and independently is the Fountain of all Ho-
1 Chro. 29. 12. nour; *from whom* (as good King *David* ſaith) *riches and honour cometh*, for that *he reigneth over all*, he will aſſuredly prefer and dignifie thoſe, who have been at ſpecial care and coſt to advance his Honour. He that hath

hath the *hearts of all men in his hands*, and *faſhioneth them* as he pleaſeth, will raiſe the bountiful man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and diſpoſeth ſucceſs as he thinks fit, will cauſe the bountiful perſons Enterprizes to proſper, and come off with credit. He will not ſuffer the reputation of ſo real an Honourer of himſelf to be extreamly ſlurr'd by diſaſter, to be blaſted by ſlander, to be ſupplanted by envy or malice; but will *bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgment as the noonday.* Prov. 21. 1. Pſal. 33. 15. Pſal. 37. 6.

3. God will thus exalt the bountiful Man's Horn even here in this World, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future ſtate: He ſhall there be ſet at the right hand, in a moſt honourable place and rank; among the chief Friends and Favourites of the Heavenly King; in happy Conſortſhip with the holy Angels, and bleſſed Saints; where, in recompence of his pious Bounty, he ſhall from the bountiful hands of his moſt gracious Lord receive *an incorruptible Crown of Righteouſneſs*, and *an unfading Crown of Glory*: The which God of his infinite mercy

mercy grant unto us all; through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all praise.

AMEN.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in us that which is well-pleasing Heb. 13. 20.

pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

FINIS.

Anne Tooker
her Booke